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CELEBRATING **15** YEARS IN AUSTRALIA

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MORE GOVERNMENT
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THE MONTH THAT WAS NOVEMBER



Hello there,

New vehicle sales and particularly the medium SUV and light commercial ute segments continued to accelerate in November leading me to wonder when the market will begin to slow down.

All markets saw year-on year growth in November.

South Australia was up 28.3%, Western Australia 20.8%, Queensland 17.7%, New South Wales 17.5%, Victoria 16%, Tasmania 3.4%, and both the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory were up 13% each

Government vehicle purchases rose 31.5% (3116 units) year-on-year in November, business vehicle purchases were up 25.5% (39,797 units), rental vehicle purchases rose 19.2% (7883 units), and vehicle purchased by private buyers were up 14% to 56,793 units.

The top five automotive brands all enjoyed growth year-on-year in November.

Toyota was up 4.5% to 21,002 sales, **Mazda** was up 15.4% to 8707 sales, **Ford** was up 14% to 8165 sales, **Hyundai** was up 21.7% to 6718, and **Mitsubishi** rose 12.8% to 6268 sales.

In terms of year-on-year volume growth, **Nissan** was up 2553 units, **Isuzu Ute** 2055, **Tesla** 1743, **Hyundai** 1199, and **Mazda** was up 1158.

The top five best-selling models were the **Ford Ranger** with 6301 sales, followed by the **Toyota HiLux** (5901), the **Isuzu D-Max** (3692), the **Tesla Model Y** (3151), and the **Toyota Prado** (3090).

Am I the only person concerned that of the 8165 vehicles sold by **Ford**, more than 6000 were **Rangers**? I do wonder if the brand is putting all its eggs in one basket.

Ford has some excellent product in the form of the **Everest**, the **Escape**, and the **Puma** but they're not selling in the same numbers as Toyota's **Prado/Fortuner**, the **RAV4**, and the **CH-R**.

Something needs to happen urgently if Ford isn't to remain a one-trick pony in Australia.

The **Tesla Model Y** was the best-selling battery electric vehicle in November 2023, followed by the new **MG 4** (835), **Tesla Model 3** (788), **BYD Atto 3** (668), and the **BYD Dolphin** (589).

The motive power sales breakdown for November 2023 was 50,474 petrol vehicles, 41,946 diesels, 9646 hybrids, 8646 battery electrics, and 1429 plug-in hybrids.

No hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles such as the **Toyota Mirai** or **Hyundai Nexo** were sold in this period.

Japan remained Australia's highest source of new vehicles sold in November with 32,383 units, up 16.5% year-on-year.

Thailand (which supplies most of the light commercials) followed with 26,407 units up 23.5% year-on-year, then China with 18,036 (up 24.9%), Korea with 13,325 units, up 7.3%, and Germany with 5438 units, up a whopping 77.2%.

It'll be interesting to see what happens in December which is not traditionally a great month for new vehicle sales for reasons that are obvious.

Enjoy your reading this month.

Best regards,

Robert Barry
EDITOR **AUTOTALK**





ISUZU UTE CELEBRATES 15 YEARS WITH 300,000TH DELIVERY

Isuzu Ute Australia (IUA) has achieved two milestones, selling and delivering its 300,000th vehicle in October, and marking its 15-year anniversary in Australia.

IUA began its Australian journey in 2008 with the debut of the D-Max ute, with the MU-X SUV arriving five years later in 2013.

Over the years, Isuzu says both nameplates have become a staple of everyday Australian motoring; earning a stack of accolades for their reputation for dependability, fit-for-purpose, and value for money.

"It's quite fortuitous that we welcomed our 300,000th vehicle to an Australian home while celebrating our 15-year anniversary at the same time," says Isuzu Ute Australia managing director **Junta Matsui**.

He thanked 19 dealers that have been with Isuzu from the start in 2008, and the whole dealer network.

"We certainly would not be celebrating two landmark achievements today if it weren't for their commitment, loyalty, and service to the brand and our customers.

"As our brand has grown, so too has our dealer network, which has grown to over 165 sites across the country."

To celebrate the 15th anniversary, IUA welcomed more than 250 guests to the JW Marriott, Gold Coast.

They came from interstate and internationally and included dealer and corporate office staff, and delegates from Thailand and Japan.

Though the meeting celebrated past



successes, it also reflected on the current sales trajectory, with ambitions to make 2023 a year to remember.

This year, the D-Max ute and MU-X SUV have sold in record numbers locally, with 24,677 D-Maxes and 11,824 MUXs sold, an accumulated total of 36,501 vehicles.

That's 1178 more than the brand's final tally of 2022, which was 35,323 units.

Between October 2008 and the end of October 2023, a total of 218,620 D-Max utes and 84,181 MU-X SUVs has been sold and delivered in Australia, an accumulated tally of 302,801 vehicles sold.

In April 2017, Isuzu Ute Australia sold its 100,000th vehicle, before doubling that to 200,000 vehicles sold, less than five years later, in February 2021.

This October the FCAI reported that Australia's two most-popular vehicle types—one-tonne utes and SUVs—continued to lead the new vehicle sales charts, accounting for three-quarters (78.2%) of all new vehicles sold so far in 2023.

Within the respective segments that the D-Max and MU-X compete in – PU/CC and SUV Large < \$70k –both nameplates



accounted for one-in-10 of new vehicles sold.

The D-Max commanded 13.5% market share and MU-X 11.4%.

Australia's longest-standing automotive publication, Wheels Magazine, awarded the two nameplates top-honours in its inaugural 'Best Value 4x4 Ute Awards' and 'Best Value Off-Road Large SUV Awards'.

Looking beyond the sticker price and analysing real-world operating costs such as insurance, fuel-bills, servicing, and resale over a three-year period, Wheels determined that the D-Max and MU-X were the pick of the bunch.

"It's great to see that both customers and the Australian motoring media have recognised the D-Max and MU-X as two of the best value vehicles available on sale today," Matsui says.

"With healthy levels of vehicle stock landing at dealers locally and this year shaping up to be the biggest year ever for our brand, we're optimistic that this positive trajectory will continue towards the end of the year as we aim for over 40,000 vehicle deliveries in 2023."

DEALER-FOCUSED FINANCE BROKER: MEET BETTER FINANCE

New Zealand's largest finance broker has landed in Australia.

Recently, we spoke with **Amos Banbury**, co-founder and head of lending, and, **Dean Giakoumakis** head of Australia about better finance and what it offers Australian vehicle dealers.

You're new to Australia, but not new to brokering. What's the better finance origin story?

We've been up and running in New Zealand since 2014 and are now the largest finance broker in the country.

We've got a great team of 30-plus loan analysts and account managers, and we're supporting more than 250 vehicle dealers across the country.

The way we see it, we have two jobs: helping dealers sell more vehicles and helping their clients find the right loan for their needs.

To do both of those jobs exceptionally well we've invested heavily in technology, expertise, and great people to make the lending process a breeze for both consumers and dealers.

You guys kicked off in Australia this October. Where are you based?

That's right- it's been about eight weeks now. We've set up our base in Melbourne with our team of loan analysts and account managers.

Right now, we're working with car, boat, caravan, and heavy machinery (yellow goods) dealerships in Victoria, but expansion is on the cards.

We'll be taking the better finance proposition to dealers in other states in the coming year.

Why should dealers take a look at better finance?

We've thoroughly road-tested how we best serve dealers and their clients with hundreds of dealerships. Here's a quick snapshot.

TECH THAT PUTS THE DEALER IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

From loan application to final settlement, the better finance Dealer Portal gives dealers real-time access to track loan progress, view status updates, check settlements.

There's no waiting for updates or wondering how the loan is progressing – complete transparency from start to



AMOS BANBURY

finish.

What's more, the Portal gives dealers easy access to keep track of commissions due and total commissions to date.

DEALER TERMS DESIGNED FOR PARTNERSHIP

Like in NZ, we're here for the long haul: our dealer partners in Australia can expect competitive rates for their clients, and for their business fast commission pay-outs for cashflow (we operate weekly commission pay-outs as standard practice).

LEADING LENDERS AND FAST ACTION

We work with a panel of more than 30 lenders including Plenti, FirstMac, Pepper Finance, Macquarie Bank, Auto Pay.

Our loan analysts are experts at finding the right loan for specific needs, dedicated to negotiating highly competitive rates, and work fast. From start to finish, our team knows the clock is ticking.

BIG ON COMMUNICATION

Throughout the loan journey, our clever tech and team keep customers and dealers up to date and well informed with eComms, SMS and calls.

Dealers don't need to chase or field queries about loan progress from their customers – we keep the communication going without delay.



DEAN GIAKOUMAKIS

DRIVING BUSINESS WITH MARKETING SUPPORT

From dealer website forms and QR codes on the yard for easy loan enquiry, dealership collateral and signage, to partnering on bespoke campaigns, we get behind our dealer partners with a range of marketing tools and resources.

HOW CAN A DEALER FIND OUT MORE?

In our book, the best way to decide if you want to partner with someone is to meet and have a good thorough conversation about what's important to your dealership and how that service provider – in this case, better finance – can deliver the benefits you're looking for.

That's why we have invested in, and will continue investing in, account managers, whose sole occupation is to meet and take care of dealer relationships, seven days a week.

To set up a meeting on-yard with one of our dealer account managers or have an initial call about how it all works, you can get in touch with Dean – details below. Or we welcome you to visit betterfinance.com.au/dealers for more information.

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NOVATED LEASING REMOVES THE BARRIER FOR EV INTENDERS

Novated Lease Australia says its research shows the purchase price of battery electric vehicles is stopping 28% of potential new car buyers from making the switch from ICE vehicles but the barrier can be overcome easily.

Furthermore, it says many potential EV buyers who are interested in a novated lease assume that because their employer has never offered it to them, it's not available.

"Novated leases allow employees to finance a vehicle and make repayments from their pre-tax salary," says Novated Lease Australia chief executive **Bevan Guest**.

"Whether buyers work for a small- to medium-sized enterprise, a large corporation, or a not-for-profit, setting up a novated lease is easy with very minimal administration and employers can facilitate this benefit for their team.

"Even better, novated leasing makes driving an EV more economical than many petrol or diesel vehicles.

"Thanks to a Federal Government incentive, purchasing an EV through a novated lease is more affordable than other loan options and even buying the vehicle with cash," he says.

Guest says there are a couple of reasons why novated leases are so much more affordable than other financing options.

"First of all, buyers won't be required to pay GST on the purchase price of the EV when using a novated lease.

"On its own, this benefit puts thousands of dollars back in their pocket," Guest says.



BEVAN GUEST

"Novated lease repayments also come out of pre-tax income, so it can also substantially reduce the amount of income before tax paid each year.

"Add to this the cost-saving benefits of bundling essential vehicle expenses such as registration, insurance, maintenance, tyres, and charging fees into the pre-tax repayment, and the savings speak for themselves.

"A strong EV supply throughout Australia and great pricing options make it possible for buyers to secure a pre-Christmas delivery.

"This means buyers can start 2024 enjoying the many financial and environmental benefits of driving a fully electric vehicle," he says.

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RHD CADILLAC LYRIQ TO TARGET LUXURY EV BUYERS

Australia and New Zealand will be the first two markets to receive the factory-built right-hand drive 2025 Cadillac Lyriq battery electric vehicle following its global reveal in Melbourne on November 15.

The General Motors-owned brand tried to enter the local market with the factory-built right-hand drive CTS sedan in 2009, but that was postponed indefinitely after the luxury car market collapsed that year.

Now General Motors is eyeing up the rapid electric vehicle transition in the two Antipodean markets and will open a Cadillac Experience Centres to attract luxury car buyers in Sydney, Melbourne, and Auckland.

GM ANZ managing director **Jess Bala** says the all-electric Cadillac portfolio in Australia and New Zealand will begin with the Lyriq crossover vehicle.

"Cadillac will be in a position to offer a fully electric portfolio by 2030," Bala says.

"Launching our Cadillac EV business in Australia and New Zealand positions us well to be able to select the right models for these markets – just as we're doing with Lyriq."

At a media conference, Bala wouldn't be drawn on what form the experience centres would take, other than to



say they "will not be a traditional dealership".

Together with an online presence that will enable customers to explore and buy, Bala says the centres will be the foundations of the retail strategy for the Cadillac EV business in Australia and New Zealand.

"Our Experience Centres will be destination locations, where customers can discover more about Cadillac as a modern luxury brand and explore, test drive, and buy a Lyriq," Bala says.

"Whether customers want to shop fully online or in-store, we will provide experiences that engage the senses, anticipate desires, and enable our

customers to go on extraordinary journeys," she says.

Cadillac global vice president John Roth says the introduction of a right-hand drive Lyriq will enable new opportunities in important markets where EV adoption is strong.

The car itself is big, sized marginally bigger than an Audi e-tron, at nearly five metres long.

Though not confirmed, the only drivetrain option expected for Australasia is all-wheel drive with dual motors developing a combined 370kW and 615Nm. Range is rated at 506km from the 100kWh battery.

BUSINESS FLEETS DRIVING THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE TRANSITION

The Australasian Fleet Management Association (AfMA) launched its EVs in Business Fleets report during a webinar in November.

Speakers included Fifth Quadrant director **Dr Steve Nuttall**, Ampol customer solutions general manager **James Myatt**, Electric Vehicle Council chief executive **Behyad Jafari**, and AfMA executive director **Mace Hartley**.

AfMA says the report provides a comprehensive overview of Australia's transition to zero-emissions corporate fleets.

It was developed from 167 survey responses representing 86,540 vehicles across various sectors.

"It's a significant step towards informing and empowering suppliers of products and services to Australian fleets, organisations operating a fleet of vehicles, and policymakers at all levels of government," Hartley says.

The AfMA report found that 40% of fleets are now ranked as mature on the EV adoption index, a significant increase from 25% in 2020.

It found that more fleets are now using Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) with 45% having at least one BEV, compared to 25% in 2020.

Government fleets are at the forefront of EV adoption, with 90% of State/Federal fleets now considered "EV mature."

The shift to EVs is set to increase over the next two to five years, with fleets planning to add an average of 40 EVs over that period.

That's a significant increase from the six EVs that fleets plan to add in the next 12 months.

The report says fleets are planning to add new EVs by either buying them outright or taking them on a long-term lease.

Investment is also being made in charging infrastructure, with the most common charging arrangement being onsite; 71% of BEV fleets use onsite AC chargers.

And it says fleets are planning to add more chargers for their new EVs, mostly on-site AC chargers.

The report says the main drivers for fleets to transition to EVs are



MACE HARTLEY

environmental sustainability and corporate responsibility.

More than 75% of fleets that have EVs or are planning to add them cite environment sustainability as a reason for doing so, and 72% cite corporate responsibility.

Operational cost savings are a lesser factor, but 39% of fleets who have EVs believe the vehicles can save them money.

In spite of the strong interest in EVs, the report found significant concerns remain among fleets regarding their efficacy and suitability.

The most common concerns include the cost and complexity of setting up workplace EV charging infrastructure (83%), the availability of suitable models in Australia (79%), and driving range (79%).

The report found that fleets believe that the most effective policies to encourage organisations to buy EVs are subsidies to reduce the cost of purchasing (53%), subsidies to reduce the cost of workplace charging infrastructure (51%), public charging infrastructure (47%), and removing the luxury car tax (46%).

Though many businesses have added at



BEHYAD JAFARI

least one EV that's often a pool vehicle (shared by multiple drivers) with no home garaging rights.

The results suggest growth is slow (only 1% of the 86,540 vehicles represented in this report are BEV).

"Another challenge for fleets is managing the process of reimbursing drivers for electricity usage where the car is charged at home," the report says.

"Whilst smart chargers and other software solutions can manage the calculations, the reimbursement is taxable income for the driver who must then claim an offsetting expense in... annual tax returns."

Hartley believes the challenges are large impediments to the mass adoption of EVs where drivers have personal usage rights or are required to home charge.

The findings of the survey suggest that Australian business fleets are committed to move to EVs.

However, it says there are still some significant challenges that need to be addressed before EVs can become mainstream and that will need government help.



GWM SIGNS THREE-YEAR PARTNERSHIP WITH AUSCYCLING

Chinese car distributor, GWM Australia has announced a new partnership with AusCycling as official automotive partner.

The three-year sponsorship deal includes naming rights to the BMX Racing and Mountain Bike national championships from 2024 to 2026.

As one of Australia's fastest-growing automotive brands, GWM says its vehicles are suited perfectly to the cycling and riding lifestyle.

"Our shared vision became clear very early on in our discussions with AusCycling and GWM is immensely proud to now bring this exciting new partnership to life," says GWM Australia marketing and communications head **Steve Maciver**.

"With an estimated 4.6 million Australians cycling every week, our partnership provides the opportunity to help build the cycling community further, contribute to the growth of the next generation of champions, and introduce the GWM brand and our vehicles to an even wider audience," he says.

AusCycling chief executive **Marne Fechner** says the organisation has seen "how the team at GWM really get behind their sponsorships, and we couldn't be happier to welcome them as a major new partner for the sport". In addition to event support, the



sponsorship will feature a branded content program based around cycling and riding ambassadors.

Australia's leading cycling commentator and father of two, **Matt Keenan** is the first to be named.

"The GWM Haval H6 Hybrid is the perfect car for me," he says. "We're an active family, and we never go on a holiday without our bikes."

"It's fantastic to see GWM support Australian cycling. Ironically, in races like the Tour de France, there are nearly as many cars as there are bikes."

"It's really important to have a fleet

of cars that are environmentally responsible, efficient, and reliable. From what I've seen, GWM ticks all of these boxes."

The partnership will be showcased first at the Federation University Road National Championships, to be held in Ballarat from January 3 to 7, 2024.

As well as providing the official race vehicles, GWM will create a chill-out zone which will be centrepiece of the fan activation area located at the King/Queen of the Mountain site at the top of the Mount Buninyong climb.



BMW ANNOUNCES YOURMELBOURNE COMPETITION WINNERS

BMW Group Australia has announced the winners of the 2023 edition of its YourMelbourne student competition.

Open to all students from RMIT University and the University of Melbourne, the competition challenged students to share their vision for Melbourne in 2030 with sustainable solutions addressing climate change, population growth, and the need for urban mobility.

Aligned with the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, BMW Group Australia says the competition fosters a holistic approach to urban challenges.

The Lord Mayor of Melbourne, **Sally Capp**; **Wolfgang Buechel**, CEO, BMW Group Australia, and representatives from both the University of Melbourne and RMIT were the judging panel.

It evaluated submissions based on five pillars: private mobility, public mobility, urban planning, connectivity, and sustainability.

The individual category winner, **Ashlesha Balyan**, presented her idea for a Collective Hub – a space integrating safer public transport access, ‘motor-free’ walkways, increased greenery, multi-level parking and affordable housing.

The presentation visualised her concept by identifying under-used areas in Melbourne that could be transformed into her hub.

The group category, winners **Alisna Yanni**, **Bryan Jonathan**, and **Iga Wardhana** focused their entry on ‘Turning Motion into Power.’

Their idea showcased technologies such as kinetic tiles in high-traffic areas, whirlpool turbines in the Yarra River, Air Filter wind turbines in parks, and an engaging app to demonstrate how movement can contribute to a sustainable future.

BMW Group Australia says the competition encouraged interdisciplinary collaboration, with participating students integrating

concepts across different academic disciplines such as design, technology, user experience, engineering, and business.

Students could enter as individuals or as a group, competing for a combined pool of more than \$10,000 in cash prizes.

Though the allure of cash prizes is enticing, the YourMelbourne competition offers much more, says BMW Group Australia.

It provides participants with a unique opportunity for personal and professional growth, emphasising a journey towards positive change in their community.

A highlight is the chance to secure an immersive week-long internship with BMW Group Australia.

It will provide students with a hands-on experience of working for a multi-national brand that embraces sustainability.

The YourMelbourne competition is an opportunity for students who are passionate about making a lasting impact, BMW says.

It not only encourages creative thinking and problem-solving but also provides a platform for people who aspire to drive positive change in their communities.

	Individual category prizes	Team category prizes (prizes awarded to team as a whole)
1st	\$5000 five-day internship at BMW Group Australia	\$7500 five-day internship at BMW Group Australia
2nd	\$1000 Apple Store Gift Card	\$1500 Apple Store Gift Card
3rd	\$500 Amazon Gift Card	\$750 Amazon Gift Card

GOVERNMENT RE-COMMITS TO FUNDING ANCAP

The Australian Government has committed to fund the ANCAP safety rating program for a further five years.

Assistant minister for infrastructure and transport, Senator **Carol Brown** announced the commitment during ANCAP's 30th anniversary commemoration.

The Government will provide \$16.3 million over five years (2023/24 to 2027/28) to help ANCAP carry out its independent passenger and light commercial vehicle safety test and rating program, including prioritising ratings for electric vehicles.

The funding commitment will help ANCAP to address road safety challenges among a broader range of vehicle types and market segments through the testing and provision of consumer information for commercial vans and large utes (pick-up trucks).

"The Government's National Road

Safety Strategy places safe vehicles as a cornerstone to road safety improvement," says Brown.

"Encouraging the prioritisation and proliferation of vehicle safety features and promoting consumer and fleet uptake of newer, greener, and inherently safer vehicles, are clear actions identified in the NRSS... Brown says.

"Every life lost on our roads is one too many, and this renewed commitment will have a direct impact on reducing the number of lives lost and serious injuries sustained on Australia's roads," she says.

Over the past three years, the value of ANCAP in improving the safety of the Australian vehicle fleet is estimated conservatively at \$442.2 million.

In 2021 ANCAP's influence in expediting fitting autonomous emergency braking, lane keep assist, and centre airbags can be credited with saving nine lives and a



reduction of 236 serious injuries.

ANCAP chief executive **Carla Hoorweg** says the Government is one of 21 organisations that provide funding to ANCAP and has demonstrated its commitment to the body since it became a contributing member in 2009.

Support for ANCAP is also received through industry collaboration and the provision of test results from sister organisation, Euro NCAP.



POLESTAR TRUTH BOT LAUNCHED AHEAD OF COP28

Polestar has launched the Polestar Truth Bot, a purpose-built bot on X (formerly Twitter), created to debunk common inaccuracies relating to climate change within the automotive industry.

A discussion panel, called the Global Automotive Stocktake, is another contribution to the transparency debate during the COP28 global climate conference.

Polestar says the initiative was launched in light of a deteriorating environment when it comes to climate mis- and disinformation on social media.

It says scientists have raised the alarm about an increase in "climate denier bots", and the United Nations has warned that mis- and disinformation are "delaying urgent action to ensure a liveable future for the planet."

Polestar also says a report by Climate Action Against Disinformation reveals that X ranked lowest out of the five major social media platforms



for actions to limit the spread of misinformation.

"The deliberate misuse of climate data is incredibly damaging. Particularly now, in the lead-up to COP28, the conversation is muddled between fact and fiction," says Polestar head of sustainability **Fredrika Klarén**.

"We believe that the opposite – a truthful use of scientific data – can be a powerful tool to help navigate climate action, and we encourage everyone to join us in spreading this on social platforms," she says

Since 2020, Polestar has published Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) for all its models, including detailed reporting on emissions and climate impact, as well as information on material sourcing and supply chain traceability.

Earlier in 2023, alongside Rivian, Polestar initiated the Pathway report from Kearney, which sees a joint effort towards collective climate action within the automotive industry.





AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMER VISIT STARTS F-150 DELIVERIES

Ford Australia has begun customer deliveries of the F-150 pick-up truck by inviting a small group to tour the RMA Automotive facility in Mickleham, north of Melbourne, where the trucks are converted to right-hand drive.

The customers met Ford Australia's product development engineers and RMA Automotive leadership for an in-depth tour into the facility, which can re-manufacture up to 20 F-150s each day, using an assembly line with 65 individual stations.

Ford says that it takes around 22 hours over three days to complete each vehicle.

The customers could take an F-150 for a test drive, experiencing the truck's capability, comfort, and quality first-hand.

Originally manufactured in Detroit, USA, the F-150s undergo detailed re-manufacturing. The process requires about 500 new parts.

Key systems, including the steering, climate control, lighting, the instrument panel, and software are

recalibrated to suit Australia.

Located in the same precinct as Ford Australia's new parts distribution centre, the 21,000sqm RMA Automotive facility sees engineers from Ford and RMA Automotive collaborate to remanufacture the trucks.

Ford sells the F-150 XLT and Lariat, in short wheelbase and long wheelbase variants, through the nationwide dealer network.

NISSAN FINANCIAL SERVICES AUSTRALIA MARKS 15 YEARS

Nissan Financial Services Australia (NFSA) is marking 15 years of helping buyers secure a vehicle with almost 600,000 Nissans delivered since 2008.

The financial arm of Nissan Australia, NFSA was founded in 2008 with 10 people working from a small meeting room.

Fast-forward to 2023, and NFSA occupies two entire floors in Nissan Australia's Mulgrave headquarters, with 210 employees working across Australia and New Zealand.

The first financial contract was issued on a 2008 Nissan Navara for \$34,121.25 from Magic Nissan in Western Australia.

Fifteen years later Nissan Financial Services Australia has put a total 594,549 customers on the road.

"Of course, the numbers are an important part of any financial services story, but far more important is the human impact, with the NFSA team helping put more than half a million Australians on the road to date," says Nissan Financial Services Australia

managing director Peter Jones.

"That's almost 600,000 sets of unforgettable road-trip memories formed, millions of sing-alongs and games of I Spy, along with countless business meetings and growth opportunities explored.

"That's what has really motivated the entire NFSA team over the past 15 years, and it will continue to do so for the next 15 and more," he says.



DRIVING SAFER CONSUMER CHOICES FOR USED CARS

The Federal Government and the Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) are partnering to deliver the Used Car Safety Ratings program.

Through this program, the Government has committed \$250,000 to MUARC to deliver the Used Car Safety Ratings stream over the next five years.

This funding will fund annual updates to the Used Car Safety Rating.

Through the updates, the program aims to influence used car buyers to choose the safest vehicle available and thereby increase the safety of all road users.

The Used Car Safety Ratings program collects and analyses the most up to date crash and vehicle fleet profile data.

Data for the ratings is determined through independent analysis of real-world crash statistics.

In 2023, the ratings have been expanded to focus on not only how a vehicle protects the driver, but also its impact on other road users in a crash and its crash avoidance technology.

Each is rated out of five, with a new overall safety star rating showing the combined results.

Used Car Safety Ratings are determined through research analysis of millions of vehicles involved in police-reported crashes across Australia and New

Zealand.

Demographic factors, such as who was driving and the crash circumstances are considered, with ratings adjusted based on several factors.

They include driver gender and age, crash location, crash year, number of vehicles involved, and the speed limit at the crash site.

The annual reports include a 'Safer Pick' marking on vehicles which provide good protection for the driver, are less likely to result in serious injuries to other drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists and have a lower risk of being involved in a crash (including reversing crashes).

The Car Safety Rating Program, backed by a government commitment of \$16.5 million over five years from 2023/24 to 2027/28, prioritises safe vehicles under the National Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

The 2023 Used Car Safety Rating Report can be viewed at Used Car Safety ratings 2023.

"The Albanese Government is delivering on our commitment to deliver funding to the Monash University Accident Research Centre through the Car Safety Ratings Program," says assistant minister for infrastructure and transport senator **Carol Brown**.

"Through the National Road Safety Action Plan 2023-25, the Australian

Government is working towards increasing the uptake of safer vehicles, by making it easier for consumers to find information on popular used car models."

Monash's Accident Research Centre director Professor **Stuart Newstead** says serious road trauma resulting from the worst-rated car is more than 10 times that of the best rated car in the same crash with the same driver.

"If we want to optimise the safety of the fleet, we have to be wary of not just how the vehicle protects you as the driver, but also the risk of injury the vehicle poses to other road users.

"The change in focus of the Used Car Safety Ratings to consider the 'Overall Safety' rating reflecting serious trauma risk the vehicle poses to all road users is a significant step towards this holistic approach to road safety."

National Road Safety Partnership Program director **Jerome Carslake** says that when anyone buys a vehicle "be it used or new, they should consider what they need it for and then buy the safest vehicle which is fit for purpose within their budget.

"Choosing the safest vehicle for young people could be a life changing decision as they're the ones more likely to make mistakes behind the wheel."



AUSTRALIAN MOTOR GROUP BUYS BMW SYDNEY DEALERSHIP

BMW Group Australia has decided to exit vehicle retailing and is selling its BMW Sydney and Mini Garage Sydney operations to the Australian Motor Group for an undisclosed price.

It follows in the footsteps of Mercedes-Benz Australia which sold its company owned retail sites in Brisbane and Sydney to LSH Auto Australia in 2015a and the Melbourne business in 2017.

That deal also included the former Mercedes-Benz Airport Express business located near the Sydney and Melbourne airports.

The Australian Motor Group acquisition of BMW Sydney and Mini Garage Sydney will take effect by the end of 2023, signalling a new era for this 34-year-old dealership.

Founded in 1989, the BMW Sydney dealership was an integral part of the BMW Group.

Situated at 65 Craigend Street in Rushcutters Bay, the dealership

underwent a \$65 million redevelopment in 2019, solidifying its position as the largest BMW and Mini dealership in Australia.

In 2022 it sold 1950 new BMWs and Minis and 1132 used cars. In the same year, the dealership won the Major Metro of the Year Dealer Award.

BMW Group says it made a strategic decision to shift its focus away from owning a retail outlet in Sydney and to sell it to the Australian Motor Group, which is a current business partner.

BMW Group is represented by independent investors who own 48 dealerships across Australia.

The sale of the Sydney business includes the transfer of all the skilled dealership workforce to Australian Motor Group.

The Australian Motor Group is a family-owned business with a portfolio of 25 dealerships selling 13 brands.

It owns Hornsby BMW, which clinched the overall BMW Dealer of the Year

Award in 2020 and achieved the BMW Metro Dealer of the Year accolade in 2021 and 2022.

From January to September 2023, Hornsby BMW experienced a positive sale growth of 5.56% compared to the same period last year.

"The Australian Motor Group has a proven track record. We are confident that under their stewardship, the dealership will continue to thrive, offering an exceptional working environment for staff and delivering high-quality service to our customers," BMW Group Australia chief executive Wolfgang Buechel says.

"The acquisition of this dealership with its heritage and reputation, will strengthen our dealership network and expand our presence with the BMW Group. We look forward to building on this legacy with the team and providing exceptional service to our guests," Australian Motor Group founder and owner **Mark Fitzgerald** says.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TECHS CLEAN UP AT ISUZU SKILLS COMPETITION

Eight Isuzu Trucks technicians and eight apprentices were tested against their colleagues, the clock and ultimately themselves at the 2023 National Technical Skills Competition (NTSC) on November 29.

The annual competition is part of Isuzu Australia Limited's (IAL) full-circle approach of investing in and developing its people.

The top finalists, **Jason Lee** from Road Runner Mechanical Services and **Connor Gillam** from Major Motors, both Western Australians.

IAL head of aftersales **Brett Stewart** congratulated the duo, saying the competition encourages technicians to challenge themselves personally and has a positive flow-on effect for the dealerships and Isuzu customers.

The 2023 NTSC involved a written examination and a series of high-pressure practical tests under the judges' eyes.

The competition emphasised the need for technicians to be able to respond quickly to new challenges and the emergent technology applying to Isuzu trucks.

Stewart says he was impressed with the level of knowledge and rigour applied by the contestants.

"These are the people who operate behind garage doors, behind the scenes, but there's no other group within the business with more knowledge of the product and how it's being used.

"From what I've seen with those participating in the competition—it leaves me with no doubt that the Isuzu Australia network has the right workforce, with the right skills to meet the challenges of the future," Stewart says.

"As a former service technician, myself, it always brings me great pleasure to see how events like this highlight the value of service techs and apprentices...while also providing a platform for our young people to network.

"With many students just now graduating from high school and looking towards their future, this is a timely reminder that a career as a



TECHNICIAN'S ROUND		
NAME	DEALERSHIP	STATE
Jason Lee Connor Gillam	Road Runner Mechanical Services Major Motors	WA
Albert Cho James Keyte	Westar Truck Centre Ballarat Isuzu	VIC
Nathan Stiff Tilly Herbertson	Midcoast Trucks Gilbert & Roach Isuzu	NSW
Anthony Pickering Joshua Mortimer	Black Truck Sales Northern Rivers Isuzu	QLD

APPRENTICE'S ROUND		
NAME	DEALERSHIP	STATE
Jacob Newberry Blake Brown	North East Isuzu Major Motors	SA WA
Matthew Dinola Kim Coronacion	Patterson Cheney Trucks Bendigo Isuzu	VIC
Thomas Dixon Hayden Banton	Midcoast Trucks Gilbert & Roach Isuzu	NSW
James Boyce Lukas McNabb	Black Truck Sales Northern Rivers Isuzu	QLD

service technician can come with many exciting moments and opportunities."

For the two finalists of the technician's round, a more immediate challenge will be competing as Team Australia in the international I-1 Grand Prix in Japan next year.

WINNER, WINNER

"Road Runner Mechanical Services in Geraldton is a relative newcomer to the Isuzu network, so it's great to be a part of the experience," finalist Lee says.

Fellow finalist Gillam: "I haven't been to Japan before, so this is an amazing opportunity to visit and take part in the I-1 Grand Prix.

"It was my goal to reach Japan and compete in the I-1 Grand Prix, but I didn't honestly expect to take out one of the top spots.

"Working with trucks is my thing and I want to stay in the game for as long as possible... This event has been really motivating and I'm stoked to have the chance to compete," he says.

APPRENTICES ON THE UP

The top scoring contestants from the apprentice round were **Matthew Dinola** from Patterson Cheney Trucks in Victoria and **Kim Coronacion** from Bendigo Isuzu.



RACQ INSURANCE TO PAY \$10 MILLION FOR PRICING DISCOUNT FAILURES

The Federal Court has ordered RACQ Insurance Ltd (RACQ) to pay a \$10 million penalty for potentially misleading customers in product disclosure statements (PDS) about pricing discounts available for some types of insurance cover.

The Court found that RACQ sent out the misleading PDSs at least five million times between March 2017 and March 2022.

Approximately 458,746 customers missed out on about \$86,476,339 in discounts they should have received.

"Consumers need to be able to rely on the pricing promises made to them by insurers, and insurers need to make sure that they pass on those promises in full," says Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) deputy chair **Sarah Court**.

"ASIC identified pricing promises in insurance as an enforcement priority this year and will continue to monitor marketing and pricing practices in the industry..."

It will "use the full range of regulatory tools available to protect consumers from general insurers failing to honour promised discounts", she says.

The PDSs for RACQ's motor, home,

caravan and trailer, and unique vehicle insurance policies included statements that certain discounts would be applied to customers' insurance premiums.

The Court found that these statements were potentially misleading because RACQ applied the discounts only to the base insurance premium, not to additional premiums paid for some optional extras.

"ASIC brought this case in February 2023. We're pleased it has reached a conclusion within a year, with a significant penalty handed down and a clear message to the insurance industry that failures in pricing practices will not be tolerated," the Court says.

RACQ admitted to the contraventions and the parties submitted jointly that the penalty sought by ASIC was appropriate.

RACQ was ordered to pay ASIC's costs of the proceedings.

RACQ Insurance Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Royal Automobile Club of Queensland Limited, a mutual organisation owned by its nearly 1.8 million members.

It offers consumers a range of general insurance products including

household, motor vehicle, caravan and trailer, and unique vehicle insurance.

RACQ Insurance is ranked eighth and 10th in Australia by gross premium written for motor vehicle and home insurance respectively.

For each of these general insurance products, it offers optional benefit covers, the purchase of which requires the consumer to pay a premium on top of the base premiums paid for the general insurance products. RACQ also offers discounts on these general insurance products.

The affected optional benefits were Excess Free Windscreen, Hire Car, No Claim Discount Protection, Increased Caravan Contents, Pet, Mobile Phone, Small Business Contents and Items Away from Home, and the additional premium charged by RACQ for household insurance purchased for unoccupied properties.

The product disclosure statements for these insurance products could be downloaded from RACQ's website by prospective customers and were sent to all customers at the beginning of an insurance contract.

TOYOTA RAV4 LEADS NZ MARKET IN NOVEMBER

Toyota's **RAV4** was New Zealand's best-selling new vehicle in November where registrations of passenger vehicles continued to be positive.

However, commercial registrations continued their artificially generated slump as buyers wait for the new National-led Government to repeal the Clean Car Discount scheme on December 31 as it promised to do during the election.

Passenger vehicle registration rose 2.8% year-on-year to 11,491 units from 11,176 this time a year ago – with brands heavy on hybrids and electric doing particularly well.

Commercials registrations were down 32% to 3022 from 4445 a year ago.

That so many units are still selling this close to the end of the Clean Car Discount is surprising.

For the market-leading Ford **Ranger** alone, the fees add up to approximately NZ\$4.5 million for the month.

In passenger vehicles, **Toyota** led the market with 3019 units registered, an 82.5% gain for a 26.3% market share.



In second, **Mitsubishi** recorded 1068 registrations, down 18.2% for a 9.3% market share, followed in third by **MG** – in one of its best performances ever – up 90.7% to 898 units or a 7.8% market share.

Ford was fourth on 758 units, up 95.4% for a 6.6% share of the trade, followed by **Hyundai** on 663, up 16.5% for a 5.8% share.

The Toyota **RAV4** was the top-selling model with 1419 sales.

Second was the Mitsubishi **Outlander** on 557, followed by the Tesla **Model Y** on 544, the Toyota **Corolla** on 486, and the MG **4** on 468.

In commercials, **Ford** was segment leader on 1135 units, down 27.8% for a 37.6% share.

Toyota took second on 597, down 43.4% for a 19.8% share, and Isuzu in third on 138, down 28.9% for a 4.6% share.

The Ford **Ranger** was the top commercial model for the month on 1086 units. **Ford** was quoted recently as saying that around a third of actual sales are being deferred until the new year.

The Toyota **HiLux** was second on 420, followed by the Toyota **HiAce** on 169.

NZ GOVERNMENT REPEALING CLEAN CAR DISCOUNT SCHEME

Repealing the Clean Car Discount scheme by December 31 has been confirmed by the National-led Government as part of its promised 100-day plan.

Prime Minister **Christopher Luxon** confirmed the move in his first post-Cabinet press conference.

It was among National's pre-election proposals as part of legislation it would introduce to Parliament over the next 100 days if elected.

The Government is beginning work on a refreshed Government Policy Statement reflecting the new Roads of National Significance and new public transport priorities.

And it will stop blanket speed

limit reductions and start work on replacing the Land Transport Rule: Setting of Speed Limits 2022.

"New Zealanders voted not only for a change of government, but for a change of policies and a change of approach – and our coalition government is ready to deliver that change," Luxon says.

"We will be a government that gets things done for New Zealand and we will start straight away, with a 100-day plan that includes a range of actions we will take to improve the lives of New Zealanders.

"Our government is starting the way we mean to go on – ambitious for New Zealand. With 49 actions to deliver in the next 100 days, this plan is hugely ambitious, but we'll

be working as hard as we can.

"Our 100-day plan is focused on rebuilding the economy, easing the cost of living, restoring law and order and delivering better public services. These are things that New Zealanders voted for and expect us to deliver," Luxon says.

Motor Industry Association chief executive **Aimee Wiley** says confirmation that the Clean Car Discount scheme would end was expected.

"The MIA, our members and the entire industry are eagerly awaiting further details, specifics and next steps surrounding the cessation of CCD."

AUTO WOMEN SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

Laurie Luckie and Leah Davis have won the second round of the Motor Trades Association of Queensland's 2023 Auto Women scholarships.

Luckie, from Pat's Pro Resto's & Refinishing, has been awarded the Leading Edge scholarship valued at \$3490, and Davis from Cricks Tweed, has been awarded the Executive ready Scholarship valued at \$8490.

The scholarships, sponsored by MTA Queensland, Spirit Super, and Women & Leadership Australia, aim to advance the careers of women working in automotive.

The first course, Leading Edge, is designed to help women in early-career positions become confident, capable, and motivated leaders.

The recipient, Luckie, is a fourth-year apprentice refinisher (spray painter) in Beaudesert.

After working for many years in the automotive industry in an accounts/payroll position, Luckie decided she was ready for a change.

With a passion for cars and a desire to get hands-on, she signed up for her apprenticeship in 2021 at Pat's Pro Resto's & Refinishing.

There, Luckie gets to work on a variety of high-end vehicles, including hot rods, street machines, and classics.

Working on jobs from full restorations to custom builds, Luckie says she loves being an automotive refinisher and wouldn't change it for the world.

"I like everything about the job. It's hard work, but the satisfaction of completing a build is so incredible, it makes it all worth it," she says.

"You hear so many stories of strong, female leaders making a name for themselves, it's very inspiring.

"I want to be that for the next generation and believe the Leading Edge course will bring me one step closer to my goals."

The second course, Executive Ready, is designed to stretch mid-level leaders and propel them towards executive positions, bolstering skills and mindsets.

Scholarship winner Davis, the financial controller at Cricks Tweed, entered the automotive industry as a trainee



LAURA LUCKIE

salesperson at the age of 18.

After gaining experience in different roles, she became the administration manager of her own Von Bibra branch.

After a decade with the company, Davis joined the team at Cricks Tweed as financial controller.

She oversees the accounting activities in the organisation, including providing accurate and timely information to guide decision making.

"I absolutely love the automotive industry and am always looking for ways to further my knowledge.



LEAH DAVIS

"The more I learn, the more I realise there's still so much to learn. My passion for cars and the industry fuels my desire to reach my goals, and I definitely set them high," Davis says.

"I would like to be the dealer principal of my own dealership and I believe the Executive Ready scholarship is an incredible opportunity for growth, both professionally and personally, that will help propel me to where I need to be."

The next Auto Women scholarship round will open on March 1, 2024.



TESLA MODEL Y

HYBRID SALES SURGE IN THIRD QUARTER OF 2023

Hybrid vehicle sales grew very strongly in the September quarter, taking market share from both internal combustion engine (ICE) cars and battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

That's the word from the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) whose EV Index online data dashboard collates sales of new light vehicles.

It shows that in the September quarter 10.31% of new light vehicles sold in Australia were hybrids – up from 6.26% in the March and 7.49% in the June quarters.

ICE market share continued to decline while BEV market share fell from Q2 to Q3 but remained higher than it was in the March quarter.

In the first quarter of this year, BEVs outsold hybrids in five out of eight states and territories, says the AAA.

In the second quarter BEVs led in six jurisdictions but in the third quarter hybrids outsold BEVs everywhere except the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).

Sales of plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) remain low, the AAA adds.

Though overall BEV sales fell in Q3, sales in three categories grew from small bases.

"Small car BEV sales almost tripled – 1882 were sold in Q3, up from 473 in Q2



NISSAN LEAF

(a 297.89% increase)" says the AAA.

"Large SUV BEV sales rose – 889 sold in Q3 – up from 679 the previous quarter (a 30.93% increase).

"Van BEV sales also rose – 39 sold in Q3, up from 25 in Q2 (a 56% increase)."

The AAA says 12 BEV people movers were sold in Q3, unchanged from the previous quarter, while sales fell in all other BEV categories.

Q3 hybrid sales rose in all jurisdictions and in all but one vehicle class with large car hybrid sales falling from seven in Q2 to three in Q3, it adds.

"Growth rates were very high in the small car and small SUV categories (up 88.35% and 50.95% respectively).

"Medium car hybrid sales also grew strongly – up 41.98%.

"But medium SUVs are still the best-selling hybrid category – accounting for 37.34% of hybrid sales in Q3 (or 11,731

of 31,418 hybrids sold). Sales in this category rose by 30.21% in Q3.

The Tesla **Model Y** medium SUV is Australia's best-selling BEV, with the 2023 Model Y rear-wheel drive auto priced at \$65,400 (\$68,900 in Q1 2023).

The Nissan **Leaf** is a high-selling small BEV with the listed price \$50,990 for the 2023 ZE1 Auto MY23, the AAA adds.

The Toyota **RAV4** medium SUV is the best-selling hybrid priced at \$42,260 for the 2023 model.

The EV Index brings together information from multiple national, state and territory sources, including information provided by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries.

It's intended to enable consumers, businesses, and fleet managers to see the trends transforming the market, says the AAA.

LATEST CAR RESEARCH AND BUYING HABITS REVEALED

An independent study that highlights the post-COVID-19 habits of Australians researching and purchasing cars has been released by Carsales, two years on from its last study.

The study is the latest instalment in consumer research specialists Ipsos' The Journey to Vehicle Ownership series.

Building on research from 2013, 2017, and 2021, the update highlights post-pandemic buyer behaviour including changes to triggers, potential challenges, budget considerations, and the future of online car buying.

"Our last Ipsos study in 2021 was conducted while we were still in the midst of COVID-19. Given the industry had been heavily impacted, we were keen to undertake another check to validate the journey length now life has returned to a post-pandemic norm and keep up with fast evolving consumer behaviour" says Carsales EGM – marketing, content and customer, **Rafael Constantinou.**

"Purchasing a vehicle continues to be a significant commitment in terms of both time and money for Australians.

"The range of online resources, myriad of vehicle options, diverse purchasing avenues, and aftersales support considerations add layers to the decision-making process.

"This research reinforces that consumers' journeys are varied and at times on again and off again. And it's clear the important part Carsales plays.

"The Ipsos study shows Aussie car buyers are spending a median length of 5.7 months researching their vehicles, compared to seven months in 2021.

"The research also highlights the significant role of car review and comparison sites like Carsales play right from the start of the buyer's journey and how these sites dominate influence throughout – overtaking all other channels."

Constantinou says 76% of respondents indicated they considered finance early in their research, with 40% reporting an increase in their car budget and only 7% reporting a decrease – showcasing a level of financial resilience.

Electric Vehicles (EVs) are seen as key to



the future of the automotive industry, with the study showing a significant uptick in consumer familiarity.

Post-pandemic, Carsales has continued to address the needs of consumers with its dedicated electric car hub, the highly successful Watts Under the Bonnet: The Electric Vehicle Podcast, and involvement as naming rights partner in the 2023 Carsales Melbourne EV Show.

The study shows familiarity with EVs has increased to 70%, with 49% likely to buy an EV – up from 61% and 42% respectively in 2021.

And the study shows key considerations across the broader car purchasing journey.

Interestingly, 46% of car buyers pause or reverse progress at some stage of their journey. That's when factors such as financing and availability come to the fore and showcases a profound opportunity for brands to pinpoint their audiences and reinforce direction and confidence.

"Whether it's researching or buying cars, we see customers through the entire buying journey, giving us a huge depth of data and behavioural signals that map real actions from shoppers researching, buying, or selling cars," says Constantinou.

"This study offers the latest car research

and buying habits that brands can adapt to meet current and future needs in four distinct journey stages: landscape, validate, select and ownership – with lots to take away," Constantinou adds.

STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

- The median journey time in 2023 has reduced to 5.7 months, compared to seven in 2021.
- Familiarity with EVs has increased to 70%, with 49% likely to purchase an EV in the future – both up from 61% and 42% respectively in 2021.
- 70% of shoppers believe there's a future where vehicles can be purchased entirely online.
- 76% of respondents indicated they considered finance early in their journey, with 40% reporting an increase in their car budget.
- 46% of buyers pause or reverse progress – highlighting opportunities for brands to engage and better inform buyers at various stages of their journeys.



DIAGNOSTIC SUPERSTARS SET TO IMPRESS AT AAAE

Automotive technicians will have a chance to increase their diagnostic skills at the 2024 Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo, thanks to two of the world's foremost diagnostic experts.

Danny Versluis, aka 'Diagnose Dan' and **Sean Tipping** for an in-depth Technical Training Program designed specifically to ensure technicians stay ahead of the curve.

Tipping and Versluis will bring a wealth of knowledge to share with technicians.

The new Technical Training Program will run across four days, beginning Wednesday, April 10, a day before the official opening of the Expo.

Diagnose Dan is an automotive diagnostic expert based in The Netherlands, and known for his Diagnose Dan YouTube channel, and the Diagnose Dan Technical Support Base, one of Europe's largest technical helpdesks.

Dan's exclusive Expo sessions will cover AdBlue and diesel aftertreatment diagnostics, LIN bus diagnostics, EV diagnostic challenges, thermal management mastery, and network troubleshooting.

"I can't wait to attend the Expo with my colleague **Martin Møller**," Versluis says.

"Our 'keep it simple' approach helps technicians better understand systems that can look quite intimidating.

"We know exactly what workshops are struggling with, and our training

focuses on providing straight forward solutions."

American Tipping has 18 years' experience as a full-time technician and instructor and owns a mobile diagnostic and programming business.

He's the voice of the Automotive Diagnostic Podcast when he's not working and teaching.

Tipping's exclusive Expo sessions will cover circuit analysis, parasitic draws, network diagnostics, and how to condemn a control module.

"I'm excited to be heading to Australia for the first time," he says. "I'm ready to share my expertise on electrical and diagnostic procedures."

Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association chief executive **Stuart Charity**: "Dan and Sean were chosen for their expertise and profile in the industry (and will) headline our most comprehensive training and education program yet,"

The new Auto Aftermarket Expo Technical Training Program is an add-on opportunity for attendees who want to "supercharge their knowledge over and above the fantastic free education opportunities that will be on offer" during the expo.

Co-located with the Collision Repair Expo (CRE), the AAAExpo is the only comprehensive exhibition for Australia's \$25 billion aftermarket industry.

As well as training, the event will feature more than 400 leading companies, and display the latest and greatest tools, technology, and products



across over 21,000sqm of floor space.

There will be a dedicated Expo Electrified Zone, ADAS Technology Zone, 4WD Innovation Zone, interactive displays, and a networking event.

The Expo will be held from April 11 to 13, 2024 at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre (MCEC).

To see the full Technical Training Program schedule, topics and to book tickets please visit <https://autoaftermarketexpo.com.au/tech-training-schedule/>



BRIDGESTONE WINS TWO READER'S DIGEST ACCOLADES

Bridgestone has won the gold award in the tyre retailer category of this year's Reader's Digest Quality Service Awards, and the silver award in the Independent Car Servicing category.

The successes round out a year of recognition for Bridgestone and its network of Bridgestone Select Tyre & Auto and Bridgestone Service Centre stores.

Also, it won a 10th consecutive Most Trusted Tyre Brand accolade, and CANSTAR's Outstanding Customer Service for independent car servicing earlier in 2023.

The Reader's Digest Quality Service Awards recognise businesses that consistently go above and beyond to provide outstanding customer service. Research for the awards was done by independent research firm, Catalyst.

Bridgestone Australia and New Zealand managing director, **Heath Barclay**, says the recognition in both categories highlights Bridgestone stores' dedication to meeting and exceeding customers' expectations.

"Earlier this year we relaunched the

Bridgestone Select Tyre & Auto brand with the promise to our customers of 'Go with Confidence', and this outstanding result in the Reader's Digest Quality Service Awards highlight how we're delivering on that promise.

"We're proud that Australian motorists continue to put their trust in us, not just for quality tyres but for trustworthy and transparent servicing and continue to recognise us as the benchmark for customer service," he says.

The Reader's Digest awards are based on consumer feedback and extensive research.

The recognition continues to encourage the network of Bridgestone stores to maintain high standards and remain committed to delivering quality and exceptional service, Barclay says.

Bridgestone's stores have adopted Bridgestone Tech Check which enables customers to gain insight into their vehicle from a skilled technician's perspective.

Through a 60- to 90-second Bridgestone Tech Check video, motorists get the technician's view of their car featuring a comprehensive condition



report, complete with expert insights into what needs doing and what can wait.

This initiative was introduced to address the longstanding issue of trustworthiness in the automotive service sector.

"Bridgestone Tech Check has been a step forward for Bridgestone Select Tyre & Auto, and we're thrilled that it's helping motorists make more informed and empowered choices about their car, while also building trust with our mechanics," Barclay says.

"We understand that in order to deliver a great experience that customers have come to expect, it needs to be built on trust..." he adds.



MCLAREN UNVEILS 750S COUPE IN SYDNEY

Mclaren has unveiled its 750S supercars in Sydney, the 750S Coupe priced from \$585,800 plus on-road costs and the 750S Spider priced from \$654,600 plus on-road costs.

Running a V8 engine, the 750S achieves a segment leading power-to-weight ratio of 587PS-per-tonne (coupe, at lightest dry weight).

Designed after meticulous analysis of the 720S model, the 750S is lighter and has advances in powertrain performance, aerodynamics, and handling.

The carbon fibre monocoque, carbon fibre-shelled racing-style seats, and the lightest wheels yet fitted as standard to a McLaren help achieve a low weight vehicle.

The 750S is lighter than the 720S by 30kg (DIN) with its lightest dry weight just 1277kg – 193 kg less than its closest competitor.

The lengthened active rear wing is 20% larger than the wing of the 720S, optimising aerodynamic efficiency, yet is 1.6kg lighter because it's made from carbon fibre.

The cars are built at the McLaren Composites Technology Centre (MCTC) in Yorkshire, England, and angle configurations are unique to Coupe and Spider with three main operational

positions to improve downforce, reduce drag, and braking from high speed.

"(The) reputation of the 720S meant that 750S needed scrupulous consideration to create a supercar that enhanced its predecessor," says McLaren Automotive APAC and China managing director **Paul Harris**.

"Supreme attention to detail has allowed us to produce a lighter iteration with truly outstanding dynamic abilities."

McLaren says the 750S provides ferocious performance, with a 4.0-litre, twin-turbocharged V8 engine delivering up to 750PS and a torque output of 800Nm.

It can accelerate to 100km/h in 2.8 seconds and 200km/h in 7.2 seconds (Spider 7.3 seconds).

In-gear acceleration is amplified by the optimising the seven-speed transmission's gearing and fitting a revised kickdown control strategy.

The car's Proactive Chassis Control linked-hydraulic suspension improves dynamic capabilities. It maintains the same levels of comfort while improving overall circuit performance.

Better front-end grip is helped by a 6mm wider front track and new suspension geometry. McLaren's electro-hydraulic steering now has a faster steering ratio and new power-

assistance pump.

Also debuting on 750S is the McLaren Control Launcher (MCL). Activated using a button featuring the famous McLaren 'Speedy Kiwi', MCL allows drivers to personalise driving by storing their favourite combination of aero, handling, powertrain and transmission settings.

The interior has been made even more driver-focused. The instrument display is fitted to the steering column which is now 1.8kg lighter.

Mounted on a binnacle, the instrument display has controls to select both powertrain and handling on either side allowing the driver to move seamlessly among Comfort, Sport and Track Active settings while maintaining focus on the road ahead.

Apple CarPlay has also been introduced and the Central Information Screen features richer, more detailed graphics.

A three-year vehicle warranty and a three-year scheduled maintenance/service plan are included as standard.

Additionally, the 750S is eligible to be covered by the McLaren Extended Warranty in Australia, which is available in 12- or 24-month periods from time of first purchase until the vehicle is 15 years old.

TOYOTA AUSTRALIA'S HYDROGEN HIACE PROTOTYPE

Toyota Australia has revealed a prototype HiAce van powered by a hydrogen-fuelled internal combustion engine that will take part in a customer pilot program starting in Melbourne.

The new powertrain technology, offering low CO₂ exhaust emissions, is the latest step in Toyota's approach to decarbonisation that includes investing in carbon-neutral fuels as well as hybrid-electric, plug-in hybrid-electric, battery-electric, and fuel-cell electric vehicles.

The prototype hydrogen HiAce will be driven by Australian companies interested in the potential for fit-for-purpose commercial vehicles with low CO₂ emissions.

The businesses will be able to evaluate the technology and provide feedback to Toyota to support further development.

The aim is to bring hydrogen-fuelled internal combustion engine vehicles to commercial use.

Toyota Australia chief executive **Matthew Callachor** says the company is proud to have been selected by Toyota Japan to operate the Australian-first pilot program.

"This technology offers the potential for Toyota to produce vehicles that meet the practical requirements of commercial customers while reducing CO₂ tailpipe emissions," he says.

"Toyota Australia is committed to playing a role in the development of Australia's hydrogen economy.

"Running the pilot program for this new hydrogen powertrain technology builds upon our development and investment in the hydrogen space.

"Australia is the perfect place to run such a program with our Federal and State governments committing \$6.3 billion in funding for such projects under the National Hydrogen Strategy.

"We also have a variety of environments and climatic conditions that will enable us to evaluate the hydrogen powertrain technology to its fullest and ensure it delivers on Toyota's high standards," he says.

Toyota began developing hydrogen-fuelled internal combustion engine technology in Japan in 2017, and debuted it in 2021 in a Corolla Sport that was raced in four rounds of the Super Taikyu series in Japan.

Taking the experience and knowledge gained from testing the technology under motorsport's extreme conditions, Toyota developed the technology



further to meet emissions standards before adapting it for use in the HiAce.

It chose the HiAce to pilot the new technology for several reasons.

It provided the opportunity to install the engine up front and the hydrogen fuel tanks under the floor, ensuring minimal impact on internal space and payload.

Also, it's the type of vehicle used for short "back to base" commercial trips, whether that's transporting people in the 12-seat HiAce Commuter bus or goods in the HiAce van.

The prototype hydrogen HiAce uses the V6 turbo petrol engine available in some overseas markets for the LandCruiser 300 Series.

It drives the rear wheels through a 10-speed automatic gearbox.

The engine has been modified to run on compressed hydrogen gas, using a unique direct-injection system that enables it to meet Euro VI emission standards.

Maximum power output is 120kW with peak torque of 354Nm.

Though the hydrogen powertrain results in almost zero CO₂ emissions, the process of igniting hydrogen in the engine generates small amounts of oxides of nitrogen (NO_x), that have been reduced to meet the Euro VI emission standards by using a selective catalytic reduction system.

The prototype's three hydrogen tanks are similar to those used in the second-generation Mirai.

Toyota is working on optimising the powertrain by enhancing the hydrogen storage, improving combustion, and exploring the possibility of adding hybrid technology.

The pilot program is aimed at fast-

tracking the new powertrain's development and will see several potential customers using the vehicle for either commuter or delivery operations.

The first will be CPB Contractors which builds large-scale infrastructure, and Toyota is currently speaking to a other companies.

CPB Contractors will use the Commuter version of the HiAce to transport workers from various points across a major infrastructure project in Melbourne.

The hydrogen HiAce pilot builds on Toyota Australia's development of projects to grow Australia's hydrogen economy and help a more sustainable future.

In 2018, the company ran a trial of the first-generation Mirai FCEV with several local Melbourne councils.

In 2021, it commissioned Victoria's first hydrogen production, storage, and refuelling facility at Altona, Victoria, as part of the Toyota Hydrogen Centre.

It now offers a small number of second-generation Mirai sedans on a long-term lease to businesses and organisations including the CSIRO, Red Energy, Telstra, ACCIONA, and Ventia.

Late last month, Toyota signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Hyundai Australia, Ampol, and Pacific Energy to develop hydrogen refuelling infrastructure.

Looking beyond the transport applications, Toyota has committed to assembly of fuel-cell generators at Altona for French energy company EODEV.

Toyota will distribute the generators in Australia and New Zealand.



NEW-GEN TRITON DUE HERE FEBRUARY

Pricing of the new model Mitsubishi Motors Triton ute starts at \$43,690, Mitsubishi Australia has announced.

The truck arrives in local showrooms next February.

Both 4x2 and 4x4 drivetrains will be available with an updated six-speed automatic transmission. On some variants, a six-speed manual will be available later.

At launch, Double Cab and Club Cab Pick-up variants will be available, with Cab-Chassis variants to be added later.

New-Gen Triton follows a highly recognisable model structure, offering GLX, GLX+, GLS, and GSR grades.

FUEL ECONOMY AND CO2, ACCORDING TO ADR 81/02, ARE:

Drivetrain	Grade	Fuel Economy (L / 100km)	CO2 (g / km)
4 x 2	GLX Double Cab	7.5	199
4 x 4	GLX+ Club Cab	7.7	203
4 x 4	GLX Double Cab	7.7	200
4 x 4	GLX+ Double Cab	7.7	200
4 x 4	GLS Double Cab	7.7	203
4 x 4	GSR Double Cab	7.7	203

"The New-Gen Triton presents another step-change for the Mitsubishi Motors product portfolio," says chief executive **Shaun Westcott**.

"Being a core market for the Mitsubishi Motors brand, and with Triton being

a core model for Australia, the importance of this vehicle can't be overstated, and we're very proud to have played a key role in its development."

NEW-GEN TRITON GRADES AVAILABLE FROM LAUNCH:

Drivetrain	Grade	Engine	Transmission	Body	Price
4 x 2	GLX	2.4L Bi-Turbo Diesel	6AT	Double Cab – Pick-Up	\$43,690
4 x 4	GLX+	2.4L Bi-Turbo Diesel	6AT	Club Cab – Pick-Up	\$50,340
4 x 4	GLX	2.4L Bi-Turbo Diesel	6AT	Double Cab – Pick-Up	\$50,940
4 x 4	GLX+	2.4L Bi-Turbo Diesel	6AT	Double Cab – Pick-Up	\$53,290
4 x 4	GLS	2.4L Bi-Turbo Diesel	6AT	Double Cab – Pick-Up	\$59,090



MORE RECORDS FALL AS NEW CAR SALES ACCELERATE

Sales records continue to be broken as more Australians than ever take delivery of new vehicles, latest Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) registration figures show.

November sales exceeded previous records with 112,141 registrations, and more than 1.1 million new vehicles have been purchased year-to-date.

The FCAI says the result highlights the continued strength of new vehicle sales with six of the past seven months the highest on record.

FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber** says there is strong demand for a variety of vehicles across various price brackets.

"This is an extraordinary result in what is now likely to be an extraordinary record-breaking year."

"Another record-breaking month underscores the dynamic and competitive nature of Australia's automotive landscape, showcasing the wide array of choices available to consumers," Weber says.

"As the challenges of the past year's supply chain disruptions recede, consumers have greater access to a broad range of choices and increased accessibility in the market."

"The automotive sector remains a testament to the resilience and adaptability of both industry players and consumers alike."

"However, as cost-of-living pressures hit we may see a market cooling in the coming months, and we anticipate a more challenging 2024," he says.

Year-to-date sales of battery electric vehicles have reached 80,446. The growth in EV sales from the same time last year (28,326) underscores the



increasing interest in low-emission alternatives among Australian consumers.

EVs represented 7.7% of the monthly sales and 7.2% of sales year to date.

Sales across every State and Territory increased compared with November 2022.

Sales in the Australian Capital Territory rose by 13% (1628); in New South Wales 17.5% (34,728); Queensland 17.7% (24,262); South Australia 28.3% (7281); Tasmania 13.4% (2022); Victoria 16% (29,618); Western Australia 20.8% (11,679), and Northern Territory 13% (921).

Toyota was the highest selling marque with 21,002 sales. **Mazda** followed with 8707 then **Ford** (8165), **Hyundai** (6718), and **Mitsubishi** (6268).

The **Ford Ranger** was the top selling vehicle recording 6301 sales. It was followed by the Toyota **HiLux** (5901), Isuzu **D-Max** (3692) Tesla **Model Y** (3151), and Toyota **Prado** (3090).

TOP 10 BRANDS



1. TOYOTA 21,002



2. MAZDA 8707



3. FORD 8165



4. HYUNDAI 6718



5. MITSUBISHI 6268

4X4 UTES



1. Ford Ranger
6301



2. Toyota HiLux
4843



3. Isuzu Ute D-Max
3033



4. Mitsubishi Triton
1332



5. Mazda BT-50
1190



6. Nissan Navara
998



7. Toyota LandCruiser
70 Series
965



8. LDV T60
829



9. Volkswagen Amarok
821



10. GWM Ute
768

SUV SMALL <\$40K



1. MG ZS
2047



2. Hyundai Kona
1322



3. Mazda CX-30
1081



4. GWM Haval Jolion
1029



5. Subaru Crosstrek
1027



6. Volkswagen T-Roc
964



7. Kia Seltos
931



8. Toyota Corolla
Cross
869



9. Mitsubishi ASX
694



10. Mitsubishi
Eclipse Cross
587

TOP 10 BRANDS



6. KIA 5767



7. MG 5603



8. ISUZU UTE 4583



9. NISSAN 4268



10. VOLKSWAGEN 4004

EV SALES RISE IN NOVEMBER

Battery electric registrations have reached 80,446 in year-to-date (YTD) sales.

The Tesla **Model Y** (3151) was the fourth top selling new car and the highest new EV sold.

The growth in EV sales from the same time last year underscores the increasing interest in low-emission alternatives among Australian consumers, says the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI).

EVs represented 7.7% of November sales and 7.2% of YTD sales.

Electrics had some of the biggest jumps.

In total, electrics went up 94% in monthly comparisons (4457 in November 2022 to 8646 in November 2023) and 184% in YTD comparisons (28,328 in 2022 to 90,446 this year).

Plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) also had a marked increase, although off a lower base.

Total PHEVs went up 233.1% in monthly comparisons (429 to 1429) and 80.9% YTD (5477 to 9910).

Passenger electrics rose 330.3% (710 to 3055) in November comparisons and 113.2% YTD (12,392 to 26,414).

In the same category PHEVs went from 26 to 68 in monthly comparisons (161.5%) and 334 to 458 (11.3%) YTD.

The popular SUV category saw electrics go from 3740 in November last year to 5568 last month – up 48.9%, and from 15,886 to 53,828 (238.8%) YTD.

PHEVs went up from 403 to 1361 or 237.7% (November comparisons) and 5093 to 9452 (85.6%) YTD.

In the light commercial category, electrics moved from seven to 23 (221.6%) and 48 to 204 (325%) in November and YTD comparisons respectively.

Meanwhile, a new Electric Vehicle Council (EVC) calculator gives Australian drivers EV versus internal combustion engine (ICE) emissions information.

The new online calculator, launched on November 30, gives Australian drivers an accurate comparison of how much carbon they'll prevent from entering the atmosphere if they select an EV over a petrol or hybrid vehicle, the council says.

Its lifecycle emissions calculator compares the amount of emissions that EVs, petrol, and hybrid cars produce



THE TESLA MODEL Y IS THE TOP SELLING EV IN AUSTRALIA IN NOVEMBER AND FOURTH AMONG ALL NEW VEHICLES OVERALL.

during their life, based on factors including production, fuel lifecycle, and recycling.

It displays the vehicles' CO2 emissions per kilometre and total lifetime emissions using electricity from the grid which changes for each state and territory.

The tool will help dispel myths about EVs' environmental impact, says EVC chief executive **Behyad Jafari**.

"Our calculator shows EVs are miles ahead of petrol vehicles in terms of climate impact.

"We have adopted a conservative approach in our calculations to assume all EVs are being made in locations with low renewable energy uptake, when in reality, many EV factories globally are starting to source 100% renewable energy," Jafari says.

"Even with our conservative approach, the results show that, on average, EVs produce about half the emissions of comparable petrol cars over their lifetime, and close to a 40%

improvement on hybrid vehicles across segments where hybrid vehicles exist.

"Electric vehicles are inherently more eco-friendly because they have zero exhaust emissions," says Jafari.

"Even when charged using the existing electricity grid, EVs still produce lower net emissions than conventional petrol cars.

"As electricity grids become cleaner and battery recycling and repurposing keep improving, the environmental footprint of EVs will decrease even further."

The lifecycle emissions calculator is one of a suite of resources that form the EVC's new online consumer hub – a one-stop shop for Australian motorists considering the switch to EVs.

It includes a guide to charging EVs at home, a catalogue of EVs available in Australia, and clarifications of various myths and misconceptions.

Visit www.electricvehiclecouncil.com.au for more information.

ELECTRIC, PHEV AND HYBRID SALES				NOVEMBER 2023			
Total Market	Month		YTD		Variance +/- Vol. & %		
	2023	2022	2023	2022	MTH	YTD	MTH
ELECTRIC							
Passenger Private	3,055	710	26,414	12,392	2,345	14,022	330.3%
SUV Private	5,568	3,740	53,828	15,886	1,828	37,942	48.9%
Light Commercial Non-Private	23	7	204	48	16	156	228.6%
Sub Total	8,646	4,457	80,446	28,326	4,189	52,120	94.0%
HYBRID							
Passenger Private	3,037	3,522	25,553	24,958	-485	595	-13.8%
SUV Private	6,603	5,010	63,005	49,776	1,593	13,229	31.8%
Sub Total	9,640	8,532	88,558	74,734	1,108	13,824	13.0%
PHEV							
Passenger Private	68	26	458	384	42	74	161.5%
SUV Private	1,361	403	9,452	5,093	958	4,359	237.7%
Sub Total	1,429	429	9,910	5,477	1,000	4,433	233.1%
TOTAL	19,715	13,418	178,914	103,060	6,297	75,854	46.9%