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JANUARY 2024

THE AUSTRALIAN VEHICLE DEALER'S NEWS SOURCE



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THE NEW WORLD ORDER?



Happy New Year and welcome to 2024.

Well, 2023 was another very interesting year in the new vehicle industry with sales reaching a record of more than 1.2 million units as production and shipping began to return to pre pandemic levels,

But we also saw the establishment of a new world order with the rise and rise of Chinese manufacturing and the electrification of the new light passenger and light commercial fleet.

And though Toyota celebrated more than 21 years of local market leadership with 215,240 sales, the Ranger with 63,356 registrations overall became the first Ford to take the crown of Australia's best-selling vehicle since 1995 – 28 years between celebratory drinks!

The Toyota **HiLux** was second overall for the year with 61,110 units. In third place was the Isuzu **D-Max Ute** (31,202) followed by the Toyota **RAV4** (29,627), the MG **ZS** (29,258), the Tesla **Model Y** (28,769).

Then came the Toyota **Landcruiser** (26,449), the Mitsubishi **Outlander** (24,263), the Mazda **CX-5** (23,083), and the Hyundai **Tucson** (21,224).

Australia is now primarily a market for utes and SUVs and there's no better example of that than Isuzu Ute Australia which markets only the D-Max Ute and the MU-X SUV and took tenth place overall with 45,341 sales.

It's the make-up of the brands and sales mix that indicates where Australian buyers are placing

their bets.

In a very short space of time new market entrants such as MG and Tesla are sitting in the top 10, at number seven and eight for 2023, with 58,346 and 46,116 sales respectively.

But other new entrants are also beginning to eat their way into the established order.

For example, while the MG **ZS** lead the small SUV (less than \$45k) segment in December 2023 with 1522 sales, the Haval Jolion was second with 1083, and the very recently launched Chery Omoda 5 reached number 11 with 543 sales.

In less than a year since its market relaunch Chery has sold almost 6000 cars, eclipsing more established mass market brands such as Citroen, Fiat, Jeep, Mini, Peugeot, and Ssangyong.

Ignoring the Chinese brands is perilous – they're here and they're growing.

GWM Haval finished 2023 up 45% to more than 36,000 new vehicles sold, commercial specialist LDV was up 31% to more than 21,000 sales, and BYD was up 488% to more than 12,000.

And there's more to come, certainly from BYD with the launch of more new passenger vehicles and a hybrid ute in 2024.

In 12 months from now, we'll need to revisit and see how 2024 plays out for the Australian new car market.

Wishing you all the best for a successful and prosperous 2024.

Kindest regards,

Robert Barry
EDITOR **AUTOTALK**



AUTOMOTIVE GROUPS CALL FOR LCT ABOLITION

The Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) is disappointed by the Government's Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook's (MYEFO) proposed changes to the fuel-efficient vehicle definition.

And it's unhappy with an increase in the indexation rate for the Luxury Car Tax (LCT) threshold for all other "non-fuel efficient" luxury vehicles from July 1, 2025.

"It would be more beneficial for motorists, industry, and the environment if the Government removed LCT from the sale of all new low-emissions vehicles," says MTAA chief executive **Geoff Gwilym**.

"Would it not be a better all-round outcome if the Government just removed the impost of LCT on all low-emissions vehicles and encouraged motorists to get on board the electric vehicle program?"

"Why not make this technology accessible and available for all Australians?"

Gwilym says the latest LCT change announced by Treasurer **Jim Chalmers** will cause more new cars to sit around unsold in Australian dealerships.

"The latest change is a \$155 million tax grab when Australians are trying to do the right thing by purchasing a low emission vehicle in trying times," Gwilym says.

"They need better policy outcomes than this and Australia's franchise dealer network needs support by serious policy reform. Remove the LCT. It's no longer fit for purpose."

No consultation with industry

The Australian Automotive Dealers Association (AADA) also says it's disappointed by the changes to the LCT.

From the 2025-2026 Financial Year, the definition of a fuel-efficient vehicle under the LCT will be halved from a maximum consumption of seven litres per 100km, to 3.5 litres per 100km.

"These changes to the LCT have made a bad tax even worse," says AADA chief executive **James Voortman**.

"The LCT is an outdated tax meant for a time when Australia still manufactured cars. It should have been abolished years ago, but now it's being used to

further tax fuel efficient cars.

"The Australian Government should be encouraging the uptake of fuel-efficient vehicles not increasing the tax on them.

"The best way the Government can use the LCT to achieve a 43% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 is by abolishing the tax altogether.

"This change will see the Government claw back an additional almost \$100 million a year from taxpayers by 2026/2027.

"It's inflationary and will dissuade consumers from buying vehicles with the best safety and fuel-efficient technology.

"So many independent reviews and inquiries have called for the LCT to be abolished, but instead it continues to raise over a billion dollars a year at the expense of motorists and local industry," he says..

"For years the automotive industry and motorists have been calling for a root and branch review of the automotive taxation regime.

"But instead, we see damaging tinkering and absolutely no consultation with industry," Voortman says.

AUSTRALIANS NEED REAL TAX REFORM

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) says it wants the Federal Government to abolish the LCT rather than use it as "an ill-conceived money grab".

"The LCT was originally created as a means of protecting Australia's local vehicle manufacturing industry," says FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber**.

"Local manufacturing in Australia finished in 2017, which makes LCT redundant, and it should be scrapped.

"It's now just a handbrake on the industry bringing the best fuel efficiency and safety technologies to Australian consumers,

"At a time when we're encouraging Australians to buy low-emission vehicles, the Government is putting a greater tax on them.

"The LCT penalises Australian consumers, as it imposes unnecessary additional taxes on many low emission technology vehicles.



GEOFF GWILYM



JAMES VOORTMAN



TONY WEBER

"The changes slug Australians with more taxes and make vehicles less affordable. The change to indexation is just another cynical revenue-grabbing exercise.

"If the Australian Government wants to modernise the LCT, they should remove it as part of true tax reform for the transport sector including consideration of a road user charge.



USED CAR SALES SOFTENED IN DECEMBER

The December edition of the Automotive Insights Report (AIR) shows that used car trading softened in December compared to the previous month, probably because of seasonal factors.

The average time it takes to sell a used car is increasing over time, while the retained values of used cars are edging down.

"In December, used car sales and cars listed for sale contracted from the previous month as Australians fell into the Christmas and New Year holiday period," says AADA chief executive **James Voortman**.

"Petrol and diesel cars dominate the used car market making up around 95% of cars sold and cars for sale.

"The market for used electric vehicles is immature but is expected to grow as new EV sales make their way on to the used market.

"In spite of a reduction in days to sell from the previous month, we're still seeing a trend of used vehicles taking longer to sell with December being the second month in a row that average days to sell is over 50.

"The retained value of cars continues to reduce, indicating an improving supply situation which should bode well for consumers," he says.

The AIR says that in December more than 276,268 vehicles were listed for sale in Australia and in that period more than 169,312 were sold and most had petrol or diesel engines.

The report says battery electric vehicles

made up 0.7% of total cars sold and plug-in hybrid vehicles made up less than 0.2%.

And it says the average time to sell a used car is 50.9 days which is a slight reduction from the previous month, but the trend shows days to sell increasing.

The list of top selling cars in the used market reflects new car preferences, with the Ford Ranger taking out top spot ahead of the Toyota HiLux.

"While the average time to sell saw a slight reduction, the overarching trend of increasing days to sell is one that we'll keep monitoring in 2024," says AutoGrab's chief commercial officer **Saxon Odgers**.

"People looking to buy a used car, will likely find their money going further and potentially be able to buy a newer model than expected.

"The continued drop in used car prices is likely to extend into 2024.

"Another key sector seeing prices drop is the light commercial vehicles (LCV). While demand remains strong for utes, the price of used LCVs is easing.

"With great supply, there's room for buyers to be choosy when it comes to choosing a secondhand ute," he says.

JIMNY LEADS USED CAR RESIDUALS

AutoGrab says the Suzuki Jimny has the strongest residual values in the Australian used car market.

The top-five vehicles for retained value (two to four years old) are the Suzuki Jimny (136.1%), Toyota Yaris Cross (116.1%), Toyota Yaris (110.3%), Toyota

LandCruiser (106.3%), and Honda Jazz (104.6%).

AutoGrab says the fastest-selling used car is the Hyundai Getz, averaging just 15 days to sell, while the next quickest are the Nissan Tiida (18 days), and the Suzuki Alto (19.1 days).

Overall, used cars are taking an average 10 days longer to sell compared to 2022.

As consumers grapple with the rising costs of new cars and the cost of living, the appreciation of specific used models like the Suzuki Jimny and Toyota Yaris Cross offers a silver lining for people who have one sitting in the driveway.

"The Suzuki Jimny's appreciation in value is incredible and indicates the strength of its resale market," Odgers says.

"The data suggests a unique pattern in the market where certain used models are gaining value over time, providing an interesting opportunity for both sellers and buyers.

"Our technology at AutoGrab gathers data from a variety of sources to help both dealerships and consumers to make informed decisions at all times in what can be a fast-moving market."

AutoGrab's platform captures and aggregates real-time market-wide data on all vehicles listed online, using an AI-driven machine learning model to provide accurate pricing and valuations.

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LUCAS HARRIS

HARRIS APPOINTED CHERY AUSTRALIA MANAGING DIRECTOR

Chery Australia's new managing director is former Subaru national service operations manager, **Lucas Harris**.

Chery says Harris' wealth of experience and proven automotive track record makes him "an excellent fit to lead it into a new era of growth and elevate Chery's presence" in Australia.

Most recently, Harris was Chery Australia's product and after-sales director at Chery Australia.

"His understanding of the automotive landscape and passion for delivering exceptional customer experiences align seamlessly with Chery's commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction," the company says.

As the new managing director, Harris will oversee the strategic direction and operations of Chery Australia, driving

initiatives to enhance sales and market share, introduce new products, and strengthen partnerships in the industry.

"Lucas' impressive track record and leadership skills make him the ideal choice to lead Chery into its next phase of growth in the Australian market," says Chery Australia's chief operating officer **Andy Zhang**.

"We're confident that his expertise will contribute significantly to our ongoing success,

Harris says he and the Chery team will "continue to provide customers with exceptional products and services".

Chery Australia has launched the Tiggo 7 Pro family SUV and sold more than 4800 sales and has a growing network of 60 dealers across Australia.

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EMERY TAKING THE HELM AT HINO AUSTRALIA

Hino Australia has announced that **Richard Emery** will succeed **Takashi 'Sam' Suda** as president and chief executive of the company on February 1, 2024.

It says Emery brings more than three decades of sales, marketing, and business development experience in the global automotive and trucking industries.

Most recently he was vice president of brand and franchise development for Hino.

Before that he was the Nissan Australia managing director and chief executive and he has also held senior executive roles at Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi, Audi, and Land Rover.

Emery has been a board member of the FCAI (Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries) and currently represents Hino on the Truck Industry Council.

"Over the last two years, Richard has demonstrated his excellent leadership and management skills," Suda says.

"He has built strong connections with our dealer partners and provided important strategic direction to our sales operations through a challenging

supply environment.

"I'm confident (that) I am leaving Hino Australia in his capable hands."

Suda will retire following a 40-year career at Toyota and Hino including his five-year tenure as Hino Australia president and chief executive.

"Sam has led Hino Motor Sales Australia through a difficult five-year period which included two years of COVID lockdowns," says Emery.

"His calmness and astute business approach provided Hino with an environment that saw us achieve record sales in 2021.

"Critically, Sam oversaw the development and opening of Hino Australia's new parts distribution centre in 2021 which has allowed our business to provide our customers with the service levels they require.

"His tenure also saw the launch of our all-new 500 Series Standard Cab and 700 Series models, and the introduction of our telematics platform, Hino Connect," Emery says.

"I'm looking forward to continuing to work with the Hino dealership network



RICHARD EMERY

and head office team to invest in and entrench a sustainable business model that will perform in any environment."

Hino is one of the largest Japanese truck brands in Australia and part of the Toyota Motor Corporation group.

CHUNG OUTLINES HYUNDAI'S 2024 FOCUS

Hundai Motor Group executive chair **Euisun Chung** says consistent change and sustainable growth are key to success in the face of increasing global uncertainty and growing competition.

Chung spoke to staff and media about the group's focus for the year ahead during a New Year's gathering held at the Kia AutoLand Gwangmyeong plant.

His address emphasised the importance of learning and preparing for changing trends, new technologies, and economic and social shifts so that the group can respond proactively to crises by making quick decisions.

Kia AutoLand Gwangmyeong was established in 1973 as Korea's first integrated car factory with a conveyor belt production process.

This year marks the 80th anniversary



EINSUNG CHUNG

of Kia's founding and the 50th anniversary of the launch of Kia's first passenger car, the Brisa, which was produced at the Kia AutoLand plant.

In the first half of this year, Hyundai Motor Group will complete building Korea's first dedicated EV factory at the site.

"Our mission this year will be

consistently strengthening our capabilities, which will allow us to scale any challenges and achieve sustainable progress," Chung says.

"I'm excited about the series of innovations in electrification that will start at AutoLand Gwangmyeong, the group's first EV-dedicated plant, and expand to Ulsan, the United States and beyond," he says.

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TON TO HEAD ISUZU TRUCKS' NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

Isuzu Australia Limited (IAL) has promoted **Nathan Ton** to be its head of network development.

It says Ton brings more than 20 years of knowledge in automotive, working in management at GM Holden and with more than nine years as IAL's national network development manager.

With 2023 marked to be the 35th consecutive year of truck sales leadership for Isuzu Trucks and a new product line-up expected from 2024, IAL says Ton's appointment comes on the cusp of significant growth and change.

Ton's relationship with Isuzu Trucks' more than 70 dealers and his deep knowledge of dealer requirements were critical to his appointment, says IAL chief of sales and aftersales **Ben Lasry**.

"Nathan's extensive experience at Isuzu and his existing ties with our dealers make him an optimal choice for leading the network development team into the future.

"With the heavy vehicle industry in a time of flux with zero-emission technology incoming and customer requirements rapidly evolving, Nathan will play a critical role in ensuring our dealerships are resourced to meet these



NATHAN TON

challenges.

"Nathan is currently working with dealers to ensure that we have the right footprint across the country to meet customer requirements."

Ton says he wants to further bolster the supply chain and support for Isuzu Trucks and Isuzu Power Solutions dealers.

"IAL takes great pride in the national network of dealers and duly recognises the value of those resilient business relationships within each zone that have been built over years and decades," Ton says.

"It's my goal is to continue this close

method of collaboration and where required looking at expanding to the right places for our customers."

Ton says an immediate priority will be to build on the successes of the business and work closely with Isuzu dealers.

"I see further opportunities to work together to enhance what's already a very strong business.

"We have a range that will only improve with the new model line-up and technology offering coming from Isuzu Japan."

...from page 16

The Kia AutoLand facility will produce the brand's EV3, a compact EV, for domestic and international sales.

Subsequently, Hyundai's Metaplant America (HMGMA), Kia's AutoLand Hwaseong EV Plant, and the Hyundai Motor Ulsan EV Plant will be brought online sequentially, with an overall strategy for the group to become a top three global EV manufacturer by 2030.

Chung says a greater interest in carbon neutrality and the circular economy is required for the "sustainable progress of humanity".

"We can help nurture a global hydrogen ecosystem and strengthen carbon-neutral activities through clean energy solutions.

"In addition, we can take the lead in social responsibility as a global enterprise, by revitalising the circular economy that recycles resources, such as EV batteries," he says.

The group is developing a hydrogen business system, encompassing the entire lifecycle, from hydrogen production to transportation, storage, and utilisation through connecting the hydrogen business capabilities of each Hyundai affiliate.

Hyundai and Kia are working actively to reduce carbon emissions in their manufacturing.

That involves a significant increase in using renewable energy, including solar power generation systems at both domestic and overseas production sites, to become carbon-neutral by 2045.

Hyundai and Kia also recently signed a long-term power purchase agreement (PPA) to procure solar renewable energy.

Chung says the group is fostering a circular economy, establishing a domestic and international cooperation system to create a circular system for EV batteries and

using recycled plastics.

Chung underscored the levels of customer satisfaction and trust that stem from significant quality.

"The quality of our products and services must always surpass customers' expectations. There can be no compromise on quality, as only those companies genuinely dedicated to quality will survive," Chung says.

"The knowledge and information we have accumulated over the years is what drives our competitiveness in this Fourth Industrial Revolution.

"In order to turn these external challenges into opportunities and achieve long-term sustainable growth, we must be prepared.

"We need to cultivate skills and knowledge that will allow us to make rational decisions even under pressure."

AAAA WELCOMES CONSUMER LAW RIGHTS CLASS ACTION

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) has welcomed Maurice Blackburn's extended warranty class action against JB Hi-Fi, and is pushing for further consumer awareness around warranty rights.

The AAAA says it has long argued that extended warranties often offer Australian consumers the same rights that they already receive for free under the Australian Consumer Law, rights that they should not be required to pay for.

It says consumers are entitled to a solution of a repair, replacement, or refund if a product or service they buy doesn't meet its description and the popularity of extended warranty services reveals that many consumers are uneducated on their rights relating to product purchases, and this extends to new car warranties.

According to the AAAA, the manufacturer warranty is a promise to the consumer that a vehicle will be free from defects for a certain period of time and that any defects will entitle the consumer to a repair or other compensation.

"Car owners are confused about what happens when the manufacturer's warranty period expires as most people believe that's when their right to repair or replacement ends. It doesn't. The warranty may end, but that's not the end of the manufacturer's obligations to the purchaser of that vehicle," AAAA

chief executive **Stuart Charity** says.

"Why are consumers afraid that their statutory rights will not be honoured? That's the real question here. The power imbalance is immense. It is daunting for a car owner to negotiate a warranty claim and that's often why consumers purchase extended warranties – it takes out the fear of warranty rejection.

"This class action, if successful, will be a great start to encourage large multinational companies to honour their consumer right obligations, however we need a comprehensive consumer campaign to inform everyone that extended warranties often don't offer additional protection. More importantly consumers need to know what rights are already covered under the Australian Consumer Law."

"Much of the confusion comes from the language used. While most people know the word 'warranty' there is less universal understanding of 'consumer guarantee'. Most people don't know that their consumer guarantees may last longer than the manufacturer's warranty.

"It's so confusing because some car manufacturers offer and even encourage an extended warranty and whilst these generally don't offer any additional consumer benefit, they can be conditional – often tying the consumer to the dealer and car company branded parts," Charity says.

"Up to 40% of new car owners are



under the misunderstanding that they must take their vehicles back to the dealer to maintain the warranty. This is despite the fact that there is no requirement under Australian Law for a vehicle to be serviced by an authorised dealer to maintain the manufacturer's warranty.

"Consumers have the right to use an independent automotive service centre to service their new vehicle and maintain the logbook schedule whilst the car is within the manufacturer warranty period.

"We need to have a complaints system that offers consumers time critical support and easy to understand information. A good source of information should mean that customers can take that to the business they purchased the car from with confidence.

"The AAAA has produced several guides to help consumers including our Truth About New Car Warranties – but it's a drop in the ocean. It's disappointing that consumers need to join a class action to have their rights enforced – government should be doing more.

"Consumers will continue to feel that they need to pay extra to have their consumer rights honoured until there is a serious education campaign, greater enforcement and a quicker response to complaints," Charity says.

AAAA's Truth About New Car Warranties Guide – <https://www.aaaa.com.au/your-car-your-choice/>

ACCC's Consumer Rights When Buying Products & Services page –

<https://www.accc.gov.au/consumers/problem-with-a-product-or-service-you-bought/repair-replace-refund-cancel>



DRIVE ANNOUNCES 12 NEW PRODUCTS

Drive has announced more than 12 new products for 2024.

Now in its 27th year and with a monthly audience of 2.45 million, Drive is using its automotive content, to diversify across topics and channels and address the rapidly evolving market.

Drive says more than 72% of consumers go online to research vehicles when buying a car, and more than 56% with children say information from online sources has greater influence on final decisions than information provided by dealers.

"Drive recognises that consumers are seeking a breadth of information from a range of online sources before they purchase their next vehicle," says Drive chief executive **Simon Halfhide**.

In response, Drive has expanded its reach.

"We're connecting data and insights from across the Drive network with a range of clever new content formats, interactive tools, and technology..." he says.

That includes AI, and the aim is to deliver the most comprehensive information to make consumers' next car research and buying easier than ever.

Nine's chief data officer **Suzie Cardwell** announced a Nine and Drive data partnership in 2024.

A new Customer Data Platform will be introduced across the Nine group which

will integrate Drive's data.

That will give Drive advertisers access to unique data and targeting capability to reach car buyers across the Nine family of brands.

The brands include **nine.com.au**, Nine now, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, Pedestrian, Domain, and Stan.

"The 12 new initiatives we've unveiled for 2024 are innovative automotive content products which will give brands the opportunity to connect with their target audiences in new and exciting ways," Halfhide says.

Drive's 2024 announcements include an all-new Drive Marketplace (early next year), a data-driven, integrated, and reimagined quality cars for sale marketplace.

Nine continues to help Drive support its broadcast TV expansion, with five new formats:

- Drive TV's first prime audience slots across both Nine and Nine Rush (Q1 2024).
- Drive F.A.S.T. Channel: Australia's only 24/7 automotive video on demand channel (H2 2024).
- Drive TV and Getaway: an integrated Drive segment within Nine's longest and most successful travel program, Getaway (Q1 2024).
- A new Drive TV series dedicated to editorial reviews (Q1 2024).
- A 2024 Drive Car of the Year Special featuring and promoting award winners at scale (Q1 2024).

Drive TV will complete its electric documentary series with built from the ground up and concluding with the buyer's guide in Q1 and Q2 respectively.

Nine and Drive will partner in 2024 to introduce a new Customer Data Platform across the Nine group.

Drive now has a bigger video production team to create a range of video products to help every brand tell its own story, regardless of the channel.

Drive has announced:

- Discover 360: a new car viewing platform from Drive brand studios (Q1 2024).
- Brand content landing pages: a collation of each brand's content in one page (Q1 2024).
- Drive digital out of home: in partnership with Vista, amplified automotive content available nationally (available now).
- Drive and Fabulate influence network partnership: Drive and Fabulate help brands reach TikTok and Instagram audiences (Q1 2024).
- Drive Brand Studios Attention Engine: data-driven content briefs developed by an A.I. Analytics and Insights department to help advertisers reach their audiences (H1 2024).



SIMON HALFHIDE



ISUZU UTE AND A-LEAGUE INTO EXTRA TIME

Isuзу Ute Australia (IUA) has extended its sponsorship of the A-Leagues, which will see the partnership continue to 2026.

The original three-year partnership was announced in October 2021.

Isuzu Ute became the official automotive partner of the A-League Men, Women, Youth and E-Sport leagues, as well as the naming rights partner for the A-League Men's competition, the Isuzu Ute A-League.

"We're proud to continue our partnership with the A-Leagues for two more seasons," says IUA managing director **Junta Matsui**.

He says Isuzu Ute will provide continued support on and off the pitch, providing a fleet of vehicles to the A-Leagues, as well as an exclusive member offer for A-Leagues Club members.

In the upcoming 2023-2024 season, Isuzu Ute plans to enhance



its collaboration by incorporating key digital assets, in addition to introducing back-of-shirt branding across six clubs in the Liberty A-League, beginning in the 2024-2025 season.

"We're delighted to have Isuzu Ute Australia on board for another two seasons," says A-Leagues commissioner

Nick Garcia.

"Its support has been instrumental in helping us reach new heights and engage with fans. We look forward to building on this success and continuing to deliver world-class football experiences to our supporters."

SUBARU WINS MOST SATISFIED NEW CAR CUSTOMER AWARD

Subaru Australia has won the 2023 Canstar Blue Most Satisfied Customers – New Cars award.

In the latest Canstar Blue ratings, Australian consumers rated Subaru the top automotive brand, awarding it five stars across key categories.

They included reliability, driving experience, value for money, features, appearance, upgrades and extras, and overall satisfaction.

Subaru was the only automotive brand in Australia to receive perfect scores for the reliability and driving experience of its cars.

It was selected after a survey, in which Australian Subaru customers provided feedback on the cars they bought in the last five years.

The winning automotive brand is determined by it being the one that achieved the highest overall satisfaction rating, once all the scores from the overall satisfaction criteria were combined and averaged.

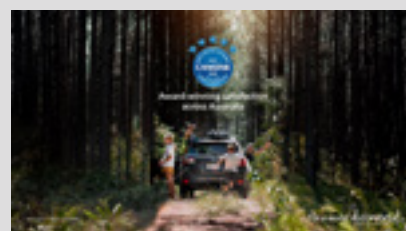
"Winning the 2023 Canstar Blue Most Satisfied Customers – New Cars award is a tremendous honour for our expansive nationwide retailer network, comprising 122 Subaru dealerships," says Subaru Australia general manager **Blair Read**.

"This award underscores Subaru's commitment to our customers' needs and striving to deliver the best ownership experience."

Canstar Blue editor in chief **Christine Seib** says more than half of Australian new car buyers save up their cash to buy their vehicle outright.

And they're looking for an upgrade on their existing vehicle, "which indicates buyers are keen not just for a good deal but on a car that offers something a little special".

"Subaru delivered just that in 2023, according to its own customers, who gave their new Subaru vehicle top marks for value for money, as well as its features, looks, and the upgrades



and extras that came with it.

"As the winner of Canstar Blue's Most Satisfied Customers – New Cars award, Subaru was also the only vehicle manufacturer to receive five stars for the reliability and driving experience of its cars, as well as in the all-important overall satisfaction category."

"Given that the average spend by Aussie consumers on a new car is more than \$37,000, this is a purchase that buyers should rightly expect to be highly satisfied with – and Subaru ensured they were," she adds.



BMW EXTENDS FULL CIRCLE FINANCE TO USED CARS

BMW Financial Services, the finance arm of the BMW Group, has extended its Full Circle finance product to include used vehicles.

It says customers can select from BMW Premium Certified used cars and get an array of features when they take up a BMW Finance package.

Full Circle is a product that until now was available only for new BMWs.

It now unlocks access to thousands of BMW Premium Certified pre-owned vehicles, which pass a mechanical and safety check and come with verified service history, six-month/10,000km free servicing, and 24-months' roadside assistance and accident management.

The headline feature of Full Circle for BMW Premium Certified pre-owned cars – as it is for new BMW cars – is the Guaranteed Future Value (GFV).

When customers enter a finance contract, they commit to a lump sum final repayment equivalent to the GFV.

Customers then have the option to return their vehicle at the end of the finance period, provided fair wear and tear and kilometre requirements are met.

They can also tailor their loan by choosing finance terms, annual kilometre allowance and repayment frequency.

At the end of the loan, there's the

option to retain the vehicle by paying out or refinancing the GFV amount, returning it, or trading it on another BMW Premium Certified used vehicle.

Other features include a fixed interest rate and loan duration of between 24 and 60 months to aid flexibility.

BMW Financial Services sales and marketing general manager **Jacob Dimech** says Full Circle for BMW Premium Certified used vehicles

provides "a reassuring arrangement for customers while broadening the product offering of BMW Finance".

"We are delighted to launch this new product and open up the benefits of our Full Circle new car finance, which has proved so popular to so many customers around Australia, to a wider buying audience," Dimech says.

"Our aim is to provide peace of mind both via features such as Guaranteed Future Value – a rarity in the used car finance space – and offering the product exclusively for BMW Premium Certified pre-owned vehicles, which must pass stringent checks and conditions before they can be part of the program," he adds.

IS THE FESTIVE SEASON A PRIME TIME TO BUY A USED CAR?

Carsales says a year-on-year (YoY) decline in median used car prices means the upcoming holiday period is a prime time for people to buy a car that's on their wish list.

The median delisted price in November 2023 for used cars from dealers is currently down 6.3% YoY, and private sale prices are down 4.1%, it says.

Some vehicles that had a median price of above \$50k in November 2022 are now priced under \$45k more than 12 months later.

Examples include a 2022 Toyota RAV4 (was \$56,990 as a dealer used listing, now \$41,990) and a 2015 BMW X5 (was \$52,000 as a private used listing, now \$42,000).

"We're currently seeing a worthwhile reduction in used car prices and this is good news for buyers," carsales editor-in-chief **Mike Sinclair** says.

"Whether people are looking to buy a second car for the family or find the ultimate first car for an eager L- or P-plater, the time is right this holiday period and...as we head into the New Year.

"The increase in new car prices will continue to keep used car prices solid. In November 2023, the top three most searched used vehicles across the board were Toyota Landcruiser, Toyota HiLux, and Ford Ranger."

With the wait times still a consideration for new vehicles, there are many popular used models available at a more affordable price, Sinclair says.

EASYCARS LAUNCHES 'DEALERSHIP IN A BOX'

EasyCars is introducing two innovations called Rego2Stock and Vehicle Advertising AI which it says are poised to redefine dealership management and vehicle advertising.

"Rego2Stock and Vehicle Advertising AI, will promise to reshape the way you manage your dealership, providing you with a complete 'Dealership in a Box' solution, saving you both time, money, and resources," says EasyCars general manager Shady Ghraiche.

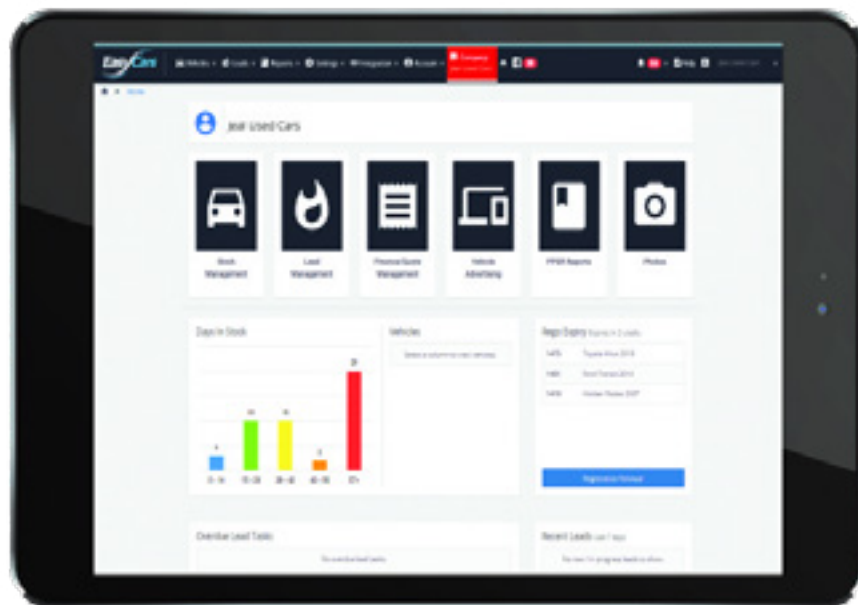
"This efficiency bundle is just the start of an innovation roadmap EasyCars is delivering on, setting the stage for a future filled with more advancements in the automotive industry.

"With Rego2Stock, EasyCars has taken a leap forward in simplifying inventory management.

"By entering a vehicle's registration number, Rego2Stock automatically populates crucial details, including engine number and registration expiry, directly into the EasyCars platform.

"This feature eliminates data entry hassles and errors, allowing dealerships to focus on what truly matters.

"The first of its kind in the automotive industry, Vehicle Advertising AI leverages artificial intelligence to



generate compelling ad copy with a single click.

"Say goodbye to manual input and say hello to ads that not only capture attention but also deliver outstanding results," Ghraiche says.

"At EasyCars, we're committed to pushing the boundaries of what's possible in the automotive industry.

"These two new innovations are a quantum leap that promises to redefine the way dealerships operate through our comprehensive dealership in a box solution."

To schedule a free demo of EasyCars' Dealer Management System call 1300 473 744 or visit easycars.com.au.

TRANSPORT AFFORDABILITY DECLINES 9.4% IN 12 MONTHS

In Australia's three largest cities, typical households paid more than \$520 a week for transport in the September quarter, says the latest research by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA).

It says the overall rise in transport costs was driven largely by rising fuel costs, increased up-front costs for purchasing new vehicles, higher interest rates on car loans, and increases in insurance premiums.

The AAA Transport Affordability Index shows that in the September quarter, the average Australian household spent \$415.37 a week on transport (up from \$381.05 in the September 2022 quarter).

That constitutes 16.3% of household

income (up from 14.9% in 2022).

For the first time, typical households' weekly transport costs were more than \$400 in three of the AAA Transport Affordability Index's benchmarked regional centres – Alice Springs, Bunbury, and Geelong.

The index shows that transport cost rises have exceeded the consumer price index not only in the September 2023 quarter but also over the course of the 12 months to the end of September.

Also, it shows the typical Australian household's transport costs rose by 4% in the third quarter of 2023. That's almost 3.5 times higher than the Consumer Price Index increase of

1.2% over the same period.

Following a year of rising costs, transport affordability declined by 9.4% in 12 months.

"The cumulative effect of continually rising transport costs is a heavy burden at a time when Australians are feeling cost-of-living pressures across the board," says AAA managing director **Michael Bradley**.

"Transport is a significant and unavoidable expense for households and is also one of the key drivers of general inflation. Governments at all levels must consider these cost pressures when formulating policy."



TOYOTA MARKS 21 YEARS OF MARKET LEADERSHIP

Toyota Australia posted record sales in the second half of 2023 marking 21 consecutive years of market leadership.

Toyota's full-year tally of 215,240 deliveries was the 19th time in the past 20 years that its sales have exceeded 200,000 vehicles – and it is the only brand to have achieved that total in a single year.

It was a year of contrasting halves with strong demand and greatly improved supply enabling Toyota dealers to deliver 123,005 vehicles to customers from July to December, an increase of 33.4% compared with the six months to June 30.

The previous second-half record of 120,124 deliveries was established by Toyota 16 years ago in 2007.

Toyota delivered 72,064 hybrid vehicles (HEVs), a record share of more than one-third (33.5%) of total deliveries.

In doing so, Toyota accounted for almost three-quarters (73.2%) of HEVs sold in Australia last year.

The hybrid share was above 80% for Corolla sedan (84.3%), Corolla hatch (85.2%) and RAV4 (86.6%), and above 90% for Camry (92.3%).

All were record-high percentages, reflecting a consumer trend towards choosing vehicles that offer reduced fuel consumption and CO2 emissions compared with equivalent petrol-only models.

Toyota has now sold 387,151 HEVs

since the first Prius arrived in 2001, and the company calculates that's reduced tailpipe CO2 emissions by the same amount as about 115,000 battery-electric vehicles.

Toyota Australia vice president sales, marketing and franchise operations **Sean Hanley** says the momentum that Toyota built in the second half of last year will continue into the first half of 2024.

"Increasingly, we're seeing people walking into a Toyota dealership knowing they'll be able to take delivery of their new vehicle within a reasonable period of four to six months," Hanley says.

"That trend will accelerate this year with a stronger allocation of global production destined for Australian customers, particularly those purchasing a Toyota hybrid.

Hanley says the Hilux ute has a legacy with close to 1.3 million sales during its 55-year history in Australia – "a track record that confirms the reputation of Hilux and its ongoing appeal in Australia".

This year will include several important new-model launches including the arrival next month of Toyota's first battery-electric vehicle, bZ4X, with the choice of 2WD or AWD.

Two new all-hybrid models are on the horizon with the second-generation C-HR arriving in March and the mid-size Camry sedan in the second half of



SEAN HANLEY

IN OTHER TOYOTA HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2023:

- The Hilux was Toyota's best-selling vehicle, its total of 61,111 surpassing 60,000 sales for only the second time.
- The Hilux has now been the top seller for the past 23 years in the Northern Territory, 17 years straight in Queensland, 16 consecutive years in WA and for each of the past three years in SA.
- The RAV4 was Australia's best-selling SUV for the fourth consecutive year and the country's best-selling hybrid (25,666).
- The Prado was Australia's best-selling large SUV for the 21st year in a row.
- Eight Toyota vehicles led their individual segments: Camry, RAV4, LandCruiser Prado, LandCruiser wagon, Hilux 4x2, HiAce Commuter bus, Coaster, and HiAce van.

the year.

A new generation of the LandCruiser Prado is slated for the middle of the year, bringing significant mechanical upgrades, enhanced performance and styling changes.

HYUNDAI AUSTRALIA DELIVERS TWO MILLIONTH NEW VEHICLE

Hundai Australia's two millionth new vehicle, an Atlas White Kona, has been delivered in Western Australia by Morley Hyundai to customer **Alexander Seed**.

In 2012, after 26 years in Australia, Hyundai hit one million local sales. Illustrating the brand's rapid growth, taking 11 more years to hit the two million milestone.

The car was sold by Morley Hyundai salesman **Charbel Abou Ezzi**.

Hyundai's Australian operations started with a single dealer in Perth in 1986, selling one model, the Excel, which went on to become Australia's best-selling car.

West Australian dealers have played a critical role in Hyundai's Australian history, having delivered the first and millionth vehicles – both by John Hughes Hyundai – and now the two millionth.

"We're incredibly grateful for the support of each and every buyer that has contributed to this milestone," says Hyundai Australia chief executive **Ted Lee**.

"Hyundai is firmly etched into the Australian automotive landscape, and we're hugely appreciative of the trust and loyalty so many people have placed in our brand, not least the heroes in the police, ambulance and emergency services who rely on our vehicles,"



"It's fitting that our two millionth buyer is in the state where it began for our brand 37 years ago..."

Hyundai Motor Company Australia was established in 2003 as a wholly owned subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Company, and in 2004 sales reached 500,000 units.

In 2022 Hyundai was Australia's fifth most-popular car brand and is recognised as an established leader in automotive innovation and technology. Australian sales totalled 73,345 units in 2022 for a 6.8% share of the market, delivered through a network of 163

dealers, and in 2023 the tally is 70,296 to the end of November.

The i30 remains Hyundai's bestseller, and the small-car class leader, with 21,166 units delivered last year.

As part of its commitment to the Australian community, since 2014 Hyundai has donated a portion of the proceeds from every car sold to children's charities through Hyundai Help for Kids.

It has contributed more than \$12m since the initiative was established nearly 10 years ago.

BMW OVERTAKES MERCEDES-BENZ IN LUXURY CAR SALES

For the first time in 11 years BMW has overtaken Mercedes-Benz – by a margin of 1869 units – to become the number one luxury vehicle brand in Australia for 2023.

It sold 26,184 vehicles, a 15.4% growth from the previous corresponding period.

BMW brand introduced 11 new models in 2023 with the **X1** becoming the most popular with 4644 vehicles sold, followed by the **X3**, with 4002 sales.

Its third most popular vehicle with 3682 vehicles sold was the **X5**.

The **BMW X** model range accounted for 61.6% of BMW Australia's total sales.

Additionally, the **BMW 3 Series** and **1 Series** contributed 3147 and 1755 sales, respectively.

The **Mini** brand had a record-breaking year in 2023 with 4289 sales – a surge of 42.9% compared to 2022.

The **Mini Hatch**, including the all-electric **Cooper S**, claimed the top spot with 2011 vehicles sold.

The **Countryman** secured second place with 1567 sales. The **Cabrio** and **Clubman** also played their part with 390 and 321 vehicles sold, respectively.

Mini's electric vehicle sales increased by 21%, totalling 551 vehicles, while BMW electric vehicle sales increased by 131%, totalling 2990.

The **BMW iX1** was the best-selling with 936 sold, followed by the **iX** and **iX3**, with 822 and 772 vehicles sold, respectively.

In 2023, electric vehicles accounted



for 11.4% of BMW's total sales and 12.8% of Mini's.

The BMW Group plans to introduce the **BMW iX2 eDrive20** and **iX2 xDrive30** in the first quarter of 2024.

It will then have six electric vehicles priced under \$89,332, exempting them from both the luxury car tax (LCT) for fuel efficient vehicles and fringe benefits tax (FBT) for fleet operators.

AAAA ANNOUNCES WAYNE BRYANT AS NEW BOARD CHAIR

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) has elected board member **Wayne Bryant** as the new chair.

Bryant, who is chief executive of the Automotive Division of GPC Asia Pacific, has been on the board since 2018.

Recently, AAAA directors voted unanimously for him as the new board chair.

"Wayne has always been a passionate supporter of the AAAA and has been an active and valued member of our board for a number of years," says AAAA chief executive **Stuart Charity**.

"He is widely respected across the industry and his expertise and industry knowledge is a huge asset to the association,"

Bryant says that in his new role as chair he is keen to continue to elevate "growth and outcomes for the aftermarket industry".

"The AAAA has already achieved strong forward momentum and I look forward to supporting Stuart, his team, and the board to continue building on this and moving from strength to strength."

"We're here to support and serve our members and the industry at large," Bryant says.

Departing board chair, **Mark Pedder**, has led the association since 2020, accomplishing many achievements including skilfully leading the board through the challenging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pedder remains a AAAA board director.

Charity says Pedder's leadership and guidance were pivotal in the AAAA's support to members during COVID and in growing the association's standing in the industry.

"I'm pleased that Mark has decided to remain on the board as a director."

Additional AAAA office bearers are: Adam Pay, managing director of mycar who was elected deputy chairman; Janelle Gonzales, CEO of Blue Toro was re-appointed as secretary; and Steve Drummy, executive general manager of Bapcor Trade was elected treasurer, replacing retiring treasurer Don Cormack.

Charity says the AAAA board "plays an



WAYNE BRYANT



STUART CHARITY

important role in setting the strategic direction of the association, supporting the growth of our industry, and the realisation of membership value.

"Our current board is an excellent reflection of the nature of the aftermarket – incredibly diverse,

packed with expertise and well placed to support the strength and prosperity of the industry..."

You can find the full list of AAAA board directors at <https://www.aaaa.com.au/about-us/board-of-directors/>

FORD'S FIRST AUSSIE BEST-SELLER IN 28 YEARS

In the last 12 months Ford sold 63,356 Ranger utes, overtaking the Toyota HiLux on 61,111 registrations to become Australia's best-selling new vehicle in 2023.

It's the first time in 28 years that a Ford has been Australia's best-selling vehicle.

Total sales of the Ranger in 2023 were up 33% on 2022 – as part of the biggest year yet for car sales in Australia.

A total 1.2 million vehicles were delivered during the year, beating comfortably the previous highest sales result of 1.1 million achieved in 2017.

In third place was the Isuzu D-Max ute (31,202) followed by the Toyota RAV4 (29,62), the MG ZS (29,258), the Tesla Model Y (28,769), the Toyota LandCruiser (26,449), the Mitsubishi Outlander (24,263), the Mazda CX-5 (23,083), and the Hyundai Tucson (21,224).



There were 24 selling days in December compared to 25 in December 2022 which resulted in an increase of 589.2 vehicle sales per day.

The passenger vehicle market is up by 1304 vehicle sales (8.7%) over the same month last year; the SUV market is up by 3180 sales (6.5%); the light

commercial market by 6094 (31.2%), and the heavy commercial by 46 sales (1.1%) compared with December 2022.

Toyota led the December market, followed by Ford and Mazda. Toyota led Ford with a margin of 9455 vehicle sales and 9.6 market share points.

HYBRID DEMAND DROVE RECORD LEXUS DELIVERIES

Lexus Australia has reduced significantly customers' wait times for volume-selling models and delivered more cars than at any other time in its 33 years in Australia.

Lexus delivered 15,192 vehicles to customers, eclipsing its previous best total of 9612 set in 2019.

Electrified models drove the result with a total of 9700 with 60.4% of deliveries being hybrid (HEV), plug-in hybrid (PHEV), or fully electric (BEV).

It was the first time intelligent electrified powertrains accounted for most of Lexus' deliveries.

The most popular Lexus models had wait times reduced from more than 12 months, and in the case of the top-selling NX 350h from beyond 24 months, down to four to six months.

Lexus Australia chief executive **John Pappas** says the support of global



production teams and local dealers enabled the result.

"Throughout the year we received a massive injection of stock across the board, particularly for hybrid-electric variants that continue to attract huge demand," Pappas says.

"The importance of this result is not about achieving a record, it's about satisfying more customers

while delivering a benchmark luxury experience."

The best-selling NX led the way with 6875 sales, including 3417 hybrids and PHEVs.

Demand for the new-generation RX launched early in 2023 was the strongest in more than a decade, with intelligent hybrid powertrains accounting for 85% of all RX sales.

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ISUZU UTE ACHIEVES ANOTHER RECORD YEAR

Isuzu Ute Australia (IUA) delivered a record 45,341 vehicles in 2023, besting the brand's 2022 results of 35,323 by 10,018 vehicles.

Accounting for 3.7% of all new vehicles sold, IUA's results secured the marque a top-10 position in the annual sales charts for the second consecutive year.

In Australia last year, utes and SUVs continued to be the vehicle of choice, accounting for more than three-quarters (78.3%) of new vehicle deliveries.

For the first time, the D-Max ended the year as one of Australia's top-three best-selling vehicles overall—joining the podium with the Ford Ranger and Toyota Hilux.

More than 31,202 D-Max utes were sold and delivered in 2023, an increase of 28.2% compared with 2022 and the first time the brand has delivered more than 30,000 utes in a calendar year.

With a market share of 12.2%, the

results showed that close to one-in-eight Australians who bought a 4x4 ute chose the D-Max, with the nameplate comfortably securing third position in the ever-evolving segment.

Within the PU/CC 4X2 segment, the D-Max was Australia's second best-selling 4X2 ute, with 5759 sales and a market share of 18.8%.

In 2023, one in two new car buyers gravitated to an SUV, with 55.8% picking one.

Seeing similar levels of growth in the market with an increase of 28.7% year-on-year, Isuzu's MU-X proved popular with Australians who bought 14,139.

One in nine large-SUV buyers with a budget up to \$70,000 chose the MU-X, with the seven seat SUV recording a SUV Large <\$70k segment share of 11.2% to chart as the third best-selling SUV out of 23 contenders. Overall, the MU-X was Australia's 22nd best-selling vehicle.

IUA managing director, **Junta Matsui**,

says the result was the culmination of "strategic problem solving and resolve," crediting the accomplishment to those behind the scenes.

"We appreciate that it hasn't been the easiest of years for our two-car brand and the industry overall, with a number of logistical challenges affecting deliveries throughout the year.

"But we were able to work around these challenges and deliver customer orders as quickly as possible.

"Without a doubt, this historic sales record would not have been possible if it wasn't for all the people behind the brand, from our head-office, regional, and of course the dealer network staff.

"Everyone has remained focused throughout the year and this record result reflects their dedication," he says.

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Deliveries of UX doubled over the previous year, and more LX flagship 4WDs and ES luxury sedans were delivered than at any time in their histories.

Waiting times for the RX 500h and LX have reduced slightly but remain a challenge at 12 months or more, with Lexus continuing to take expressions of interest for NX PHEV for the foreseeable future.

Pappas expects 2024 to be another strong year with continued healthy demand across the range.

"Exciting all-new models in the LBX and GX will launch in the first half of this year, adding diversity to our line-up and attracting new customers to the brand," he says.

Lexus Australia is committed to electrified powertrains accounting for 80% of its new car volume by

2025, on its way to 100% electrified powertrains by 2030.

2023 LEXUS DELIVERIES BY POWERTRAIN TYPE

Hybrid (HEV)	8,377
Plug-in Hybrid (PHEV)	415
Battery Electric (BEV)	378
Petrol & Diesel	6,022



LOYAL BUYERS REWARDED IN ISUZU TRUCK OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

Following a Merry Truckmas promotion which began in November, Isuzu Australia Limited (IAL) has announced the winners of its 2023 Truck of the Year Competition.

The competition has brought Isuzu truck owners together for more than 30 years, celebrating life on the road and hundreds of businesses across the country.

Some of the first entrants can be found in the earliest editions of Truckpower magazine as far back as 1996.

Decades later, the competition is as strong as ever—proving that trucking and appreciation for a great rig will never die.

Every December, Isuzu's Truck of the Year judges gather to examine the winners of each monthly round to select who will receive the big prizes.

Each selected Isuzu Trucks Series winner (N Series, F Series, FX Series, and FY Series) receives a \$1000 Visa cash card and has a chance at being named the Grand Prize winner, who receives a \$6000 Visa cash card and the title of Truck of the Year.

IAL national marketing and advertising manager, **Sam Gangemi**, says a large number of entries spanning a wide range of industry applications made the choice of winners difficult.

"Selecting the winners for the competition is a great way to round out the year but it's also hard work with so many fantastic entries to consider," he says.

"This year we have four Series 'Kings' and the ultimate Grand Prize winner, who have all been chosen for their Isuzu pride and spirit, along with the hard work undertaken by truck and driver.

"We've seen it all this year, from mining trucks to waste recyclers, crane trucks, trade heroes, and service units."

2023 GRAND PRIZE WINNER

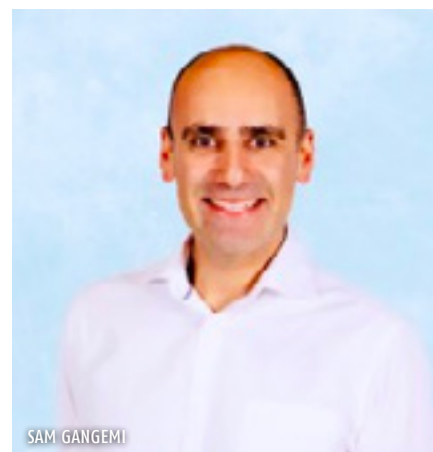
VTG Waste & Recycling was selected as the 2023 Truck of the Year Grand Prize winner.

James Prakash, managing director of VTG Waste & Recycling entered an FYJ 300–350 8×4 which is used for recycling and commercial waste disposal in Darwin in the Northern Territory.

It comes decked out in a striking custom VTG green colour scheme.

"Isuzu trucks are reliable, functional and well-suited to the tough environment of the Top End," Prakash says.

"We understand that giving our employees the right tool for the job is key to making service delivery happen



efficiently and our custom green Isuzu fleet is a huge part of that."

VTG Waste & Recycling also receive the prize for 'King of the FY Series'.

N SERIES WINNER

Tasmania's DJ Bourke Excavations was crowned as 'King of the N Series' with a NQR 87–190 tipper.

Truck owner **Dylan Bourke** caught the judges' attention and displayed the essence of what it means to put one of Isuzu's light-duty ready-to-work models to work.

With enough payload to carry a backhoe and towing capacity to haul a skid steer loader, the excavation company's rig is ready to tackle just about any job for their clients.

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F SERIES WINNER

Daniel Taglieri from Lolico Painting & Maintenance was the 'King of the F Series' with an FRR 110-260 that helps the team work around Calder Park in Victoria.

With a custom-built tray that stands out from the crowd, this truck showcases the reliability of Isuzu's medium-duty models.

"We designed the tray ourselves to carry tools and equipment," Taglieri says.

"We store plasterboard top and bottom, it has a custom canopy and storage space, and has been fitted with custom ramp at the rear for all our demolition needs."

FX SERIES WINNER

Entering the heavier end of the competition, **Sam Docker** from Treesafe Environmental Services took the prize for 'King of the FX Series' with an FXZ 240-350 that is putting in hard yards for the arboriculture business throughout southeast Queensland.

"When it comes to Isuzu you know you have the best option of truck on the road, and that gets put back into your business," Docker says.

HAPPY TRUCKING

Truck of the Year entrants are given a further chance to win big in the People's Choice poll which is conducted on Isuzu Australia's social media over the holiday period.



The winner will receive an additional \$1000 Visa cash card as reward for its popularity with Isuzu truck fans.

Isuzu truck owners can now enter the 2024 Truck of the Year competition

by visiting isuzu.com.au and filling out the entry form with a photo and description of how their truck is supporting their business or lifestyle.





VOLVO AUSTRALIA ACHIEVES 35% BEV SALES IN 2023

Not only did Volvo Car Australia sell more than 11,128 cars in 2023, but more than 3949 (35%) were battery electric (BEV) XC40 and C40 Recharge models.

Cracking the milestone of more than 11,000 vehicles in 2023 follows last year's record-breaking 10,715 sales.

For the second successive year the XC40 clinched the top spot in the small luxury SUV segment, with 5837 sales.

Volvo Car Australia has now achieved sales records for the last six out of seven years.

It was also driven by another strong performance in December, with 927 cars sold.

Volvo managing director **Stephen Connor** says the results reinforce the ongoing strength of the brand in Australia, and Volvo's commitment to being a fully electric car company.

"When I joined Volvo in 2017, we sold 4682 cars in 12 months, all of which were equipped with internal combustion engines.

"In seven years, we've increased our volume by more than 125% to 11,128 cars," Connor says.

"In 2019 we made the bold decision to delete diesel variants from our local

model line-up as we embraced the vision of our strategy of ultimately being an all-electric car company.

"Globally, Volvo Cars is firmly committed to becoming an electric-only carmaker by 2030.

"One of my first actions as the managing director, I announced that Volvo Car Australia will make the transition to full all-electric even earlier. Our planning sees us achieving this by 2026.

"We know Australian consumers are early adopters of new technologies, and they're embracing fully electric cars in increasing numbers as part of a practical response to combatting climate change. We believe this momentum will increase in the years ahead.

"By 2025 nearly 80% of Volvo Cars' Australian sales will comprise of fully electric models. There's no long-term future for vehicles with an internal combustion engine.

"So, instead of investing in a shrinking business, we choose to invest in the future, which is fully electric."

Sustainability is as important as safety to us," Connor says.

By the end of March, Volvo will deliver



STEPHEN CONNOR

its smallest electric SUV yet, the new Volvo EX30, which has the smallest carbon footprint of any Volvo produced yet.



AUSTRALIAN TUNDRA INSIDER PROGRAM BEGINS

Toyota Australia has started its Tundra evaluation program with the first re-engineered right-hand drive vehicles now in customers' hands.

The Tundra Insider Program will see 300 potential customers lease the Tundra on a full-service lease in real-world use, reporting regularly to Toyota on their experience with the American pick-up truck.

"We know there's a demand for full-size pick-ups like the Tundra, but we wanted to ensure that the local right-hand drive conversion and the vehicle as a whole met Toyota's exacting standards for quality and the needs of our customers," says Sean Hanley vice president of sales, marketing, and dealer operations.

"Our engineers have been working on this project since 2019 and now, together with our partners at Walkinshaw Automotive Group, it's great to see vehicles being delivered..."

"Toyota has never undertaken a project like this before and we look forward to hearing what these first customers think and feel about the new Toyota Tundra," he says.

Walkinshaw is building the 300 customer vehicles with all deliveries expected to be completed by April 2024.

In addition to moving the steering wheel and pedals to the right-hand side of the vehicle, the US-built Tundra Limited features several new or modified components.

They include the steering rack, instrument panel, firewall, headlights,

cabling, harnesses, front seats, carpet and trim, with many of the new components sourced from the Toyota LandCruiser 300 Series.

The Tundra Limited is powered by a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 petrol engine developing 290kW at 5200rpm and peak torque of 650Nm between 2400rpm and 3600rpm.

It's paired with a 36kW/250Nm electric motor generator and 6.5Ahr nickel metal hydride battery (Ni-MH) that delivers total system maximum outputs of 326kW and 790Nm.

The engine drives through a 10-speed automatic gearbox with Eco, Normal and Sport modes. The part-time all-wheel drive system has a two-speed transfer case and automatic limited slip differential.

With a maximum braked towing capacity of 4500kg, the Tundra has two selectable Tow modes that optimise transmission shift points, pedal, and power steering response depending on the load.

The Tundra sits on a ladder-frame chassis with front double wishbone and rear multi-link suspension. Stopping power is provided by 354mm front and 335mm rear ventilated discs with fixed four-pot callipers on the front and a single cylinder fixed calliper on the rear.

The Tundra has a 3700mm wheelbase and wide front and rear track of 1737mm. It's 5955mm long and 2040mm wide and combines aluminium (bonnet and front doors) and steel to provide a vehicle that tips the scales at 2778kg.

In Limited grade, the Tundra seats five

with a 60/40-split rear seat back. All seats are trimmed in synthetic leather with eight-way power adjustment and heating and ventilation for the front pair.

Information is provided by a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster with a central digital speedometer and analogue tachometer and a range of selectable information displays.

The Tundra features LED lights, standard dual-zone climate control with rear seat vents, power windows including sliding rear glass, wireless phone charger, five USB ports, and adaptive cruise control.

A 14-inch touchscreen provides extensive multimedia options with Bluetooth, wireless Apple CarPlay and wired Android Auto connectivity, and AM/FM/DAB+ radio with a 12-speaker JBL speaker system.

The Tundra comes standard with a 3500kg tongue and ball (capable of 4500kg with appropriate tongue and ball accessory), 12-pin wiring harness, trailer brake control system, and a trailer back-up guide that provides visual and audible assistance when reversing.

Customers selected for the evaluation program get a Full Service Lease (FSL) administered through Toyota Finance Australia.

For a single monthly payment of \$2500, the lease covers six-monthly/10,000km scheduled servicing and maintenance, mechanical repairs, replacement tyres, and Roadside Assist.



SUZUKI SAYS JIMNY FIVE-DOOR SET FOR QUEENSLAND SUCCESS

Suzuki's Queensland and NSW Northern Rivers distributor says the region's disproportionately high market share for the Jimny 4x4 mirrors off-road driving options including oceanside beaches, difficult mountain terrain, and the Australian outback.

Suzuki Auto Company general manager **Paul Dillon** says the new Jimny 4x4 five-door is suited perfectly to Queensland's outdoor lifestyle and its topographical variation.

"Adding a five-door to the range, while still keeping the distinctive, funky Jimny styling, makes it not only an extraordinary off-road machine, but also a head-turner in suburbia," he says.

"It also is in the unique position of having appeal across all fronts for first-time car owners – mechanical dependability; ease of manoeuvrability; excellent vision; a host of safety equipment; high levels of infotainment, affordability, and extraordinary retained value.

"For the experienced driver, particularly with off-road expertise, it's a vehicle with just on half a century of outstanding reputation and capability," he says.

The five-door Jimny is a longer wheelbase version of the company's compact off-road SUV.

It has been re-engineered to ensure it continues the marque's position

as having the most affordable, most capable, compact off roader in the country.

The ladder frame chassis has been beefed up by another crossmember; the transmission in automatic variants is now stronger, and behind it sits a stronger and longer rear propeller shaft.

The front suspension has been upgraded with stronger springs, recalibrated shock absorbers and a larger stabiliser bar, and the front brakes are now ventilated discs to improve heat dissipation.

The five-door Jimny's approach and departure angles off road are virtually the same as the three-door's. Ground clearance remains with a minimum of 210mm.

Given that the five-door model is likely to be carrying more people and for longer distances, the comfort levels have been upgraded significantly for rear seat passengers.

The rear seats are thicker and greater wider than the three-door's, and have two incline positions.

The five-door has almost three times more luggage space in the cargo area when rear seatbacks are raised.

The new five-door has a nine-inch infotainment HD display which features Smartphone connectivity via wi-fi or USB cable. It's linked to a rear-view camera.

A new binocular camera system replaces the monocular camera and laser radar system of the three-door model.

The new safety camera gives a wider range of capabilities including an adaptive cruise control function and night-time pedestrian recognition.

Rear parking assist sensors are standard for the first time on a Jimny; previously they were an option.

The same engine, (Suzuki's K15B) and All Grip Pro drivetrain is carried across. When a wheel loses grip, a limited slip drive traction control applies braking force to the slipping wheel, so torque is redistributed to the other side, allowing the Jimny to regain traction.

If one front wheel is in the air and one rear wheel is on a non-grip surface such as very wet mud, the All-Grip Pro system will deliver driving force, without the use of diff locks, to the two remaining wheels so the Jimny can proceed.

The new Jimny five-door, with five-speed manual or four-speed automatic gearbox will be offered in one specification – GLX.

Recommended retail pricing for the five-door Jimny starts at \$34,990 for the manual and \$36,490 for auto.

The prices for the Jimny three-door are \$30,490 for the GL Lite manual, \$31,990 for the GLX manual, and \$33,490 for the GLX automatic.



LBX WILL CONTINUE LEXUS' MOMENTUM IN 2024

Lexus is set to ride a wave of momentum into 2024 when the all-new LBX goes on sale in the first half of the year, positioning the luxury brand to an audience of youthful and younger customers.

The brand delivered more vehicles to customers in 2023 than in its previous 33 years in Australia.

That will expand with more new Lexus models adding diversity to the local line-up.

It starts with the LBX, first shown in Australia as one of the Lexus star cars in the Flemington birdcage during the Melbourne Cup Carnival.

The hatch will be offered in two grades and with two drivetrains based around a 1.5-litre three-cylinder hybrid motor developing 100kW.

The engine incorporates high-speed combustion technology with Variable Valve Timing by intelligent electric motor (VVT-iE), lightweight pistons, and a variable cooling system.

The LBX range begins with the Luxury

grade, offering a comprehensive level of standard equipment, leading safety technology, and premium comfort features not seen normally in a vehicle of this size.

Included in the Luxury grade are perforated NuLuxe leather sport front seats, with power memory function for the driver and heating for both.

The cabin's spaciousness is accentuated by a low-mounted centre console, sloping upwards and forwards to the 12.3-inch interactive information display which is positioned at eye level.

Power back door, rain-sensing windscreen wipers and Panoramic View Monitor (PVM) are standard.

The LBX's compact body, short overhangs, low centre of gravity, and heavily raked windscreen pillars evoke a sporty and stable stance, and two-tone paint and 18-inch alloy wheels complete the sporty look.

The LBX Luxury is offered in two-wheel drive only.

Sports Luxury grades are available in two-wheel and all-wheel drive configurations, with the higher levels of equipment and comfort delivering on the Lexus promise of anticipating customers' needs.

Features normally expected on larger and more upmarket premium vehicles – Ultrasuede leather accented seats, auto park, active noise control and 13-speaker Mark Levinson Premium Surround Sound – are standard on LBX Sports Luxury grades.

Lexus Australia chief executive **John Pappas** says the LBX breaks new ground for Lexus. "It's proof that luxury is not dictated by vehicle size.

"With LBX our designers have created a modern and compact urban SUV that delivers big on Lexus fundamentals of quality and craftsmanship, while offering responsive performance and great dynamics."

Pricing will be announced closer to its launch.

NEW VEHICLE SALES REACH ANOTHER NEW RECORD IN 2023

FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber** says 2023's record-breaking new vehicle sales underscore the competitiveness of Australia's automotive landscape, providing consumers with an extensive array of choices across various price brackets.

Last year, the Australian automotive market set a new sales record with 1,216,780 vehicles delivered.

The previous highest sales were 1.18 million achieved in 2017.

Toyota was the top selling car brand with 17.7% (215,240) of the market while the top selling vehicle was the **Ford Ranger** (63,356).

"This result is a testament to the adaptability and resilience of both industry players and consumers alike," says Weber.

"Despite supply chain disruptions faced in recent times, consumers now have greater access to a broad range of choices..."

"As we look ahead to 2024, the FCAI is optimistic that the Federal Government will act and introduce a Fuel Efficiency Standard that achieves the policy outcomes that lead to emission reductions while enabling Australians to drive the vehicles that they need and want.

"Availability and affordability of products across all market segments will be the key to a successful Fuel Efficiency Standard," Weber says.

"For more than a decade, the FCAI has been encouraging governments to introduce a Fuel Efficiency Standard.

"Now we have the process under way it's critical that the Federal Government takes time to get it right.

"That's essential for environmental outcomes and for consumers."

Weber expressed optimism about the industry's future in 2024 while acknowledging potential challenges.

"This is a tremendously exciting time for the industry. Consumers have a wide choice of vehicles available to meet their work, recreation and family needs that come equipped with the latest advancements in engine technology, safety features



TONY WEBER

and advanced driving, navigation and entertainment aids," he says.

"As we celebrate this historic achievement, we recognise that the automotive sector will face challenges in the coming months.

"Cost-of-living pressures and increased interest rates will impact the market, and we anticipate a challenging 2024.

"The FCAI will continue its work with governments and other industry stakeholders during 2024 to manage a broad range of issues..."

They include emissions standards, environmental impacts, logistics and supply chains, taxation, vehicle safety, data use and electric vehicle recharging infrastructure.

TOP 10 BRANDS



1. TOYOTA 19,281



2. FORD 9826



3. MAZDA 6765



4. KIA 5583



5. MITSUBISHI 5134

4X4 UTES



1. Ford Ranger
7359



2. Toyota HiLux
4447



3. Isuzu Ute D-Max
2384



4. Toyota LandCruiser
70 Series
1083



5. Mitsubishi Triton
1031



6. Mazda BT-50
1022



7. GWM Ute
946



8. Volkswagen Amarok
933



9. LDV T60
772



10. Nissan Navara
503

SUV SMALL <\$40K



1. MG ZS
1522



2. GWM Haval Jolion
1083



3. Hyundai Kona
995



4. Subaru CrossTrek
878



5. Mazda CX-30
807



6. Volkswagen T-Roc
756



7. Toyota Corolla
Cross
711



8. Kia Seltos
659



9. Mitsubishi ASX
624



10. Mitsubishi
Eclipse Cross
602

TOP 10 BRANDS



6. HYUNDAI 4887



7. ISUZU UTE 3987



8. MG 3834



9. SUBARU 3623



10. TESLA 2192



EV PURCHASE RECORDS SMASHED IN 2023

EV discounts, increased vehicle supply and consumer interest helped break Australian annual EV sales records last year, says the National Automotive Leasing and Salary Packaging Association (NALSPA).

Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FAI) data shows there were 98,217 new battery electric vehicle (BEV) and plug-in hybrid (PHEV) passenger and SUV sales in Australia in 2023.

That total was 11.03% of passenger vehicle and SUV sales), more than doubling electrified vehicles' market share.

In 2022 there were 39,294 electrified vehicle sales – 5.05% of total passenger vehicle and SUV registrations.

NALSPA chief executive **Rohan Martin** says the Federal Government's EV Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) exemption has been a game-changer for Australians considering the switch to zero- or low-emissions cars.

"The year 2023 witnessed a significant surge in new EV annual sales in Australia, with the FBT exemption being a crucial catalyst amongst other drivers, including improved new vehicle supply."

Martin says EVs are cheaper to run than petrol cars and through government discounts and novated leasing options "have never been more affordable".

"We remain optimistic electric vehicle sales will continue to accelerate this year as awareness about the benefits of EVs and the EV FBT exemption grows, and supply continues to improve.

"Improved supply was a key driver behind Australia's record total of 1.2 million new car sales, including light and heavy commercial vehicles, in 2023, up 12.5% from 2022."

Martin says zero- and low-emission cars will become more attractive as new and more affordable BEV and PHEV models are released.

NALSPA data of the top five BEV and

PHEV vehicles purchased through novated leases since the EV FBT exemption began shows some of the more affordable models are proving to be popular.

Top BEVs are the Tesla **Model Y**, Tesla **Model 3**, BYD **Atto 3**, MG **ZS EV**, and Volvo **XC40**.

The main PHEVs are the MG **HS Plus EV**, Mitsubishi **Eclipse Cross**, Mazda **CX-60**, Mitsubishi **Outlander**, and Kia **Sorento**.

"More consumer choice combined with the significant cost savings achieved through the EV FBT exemption, and the lower running costs associated with such vehicles, has empowered many more everyday working Australians to consider and own an EV," Martin says.

Last year, the MG **ZS** was the fifth most popular new model (29,258), just ahead of the sixth placed Tesla **Model Y** (28,769), FAI figures show.

Electrics across all new vehicle sales were 33.2% up in December compared with the same month in 2022 (6,771 from 5,084), and year overall, 162.1% (87,217 from 33,420).

Hybrids rose 39.4% (from 7,082 to 9,875) and were up 20.3% on annual

sales (from 81,814 to 98,439), while PHEV sales increased 183% in December comparisons (460 to 1,302) and 88.8% annually (5,937 to 11,212).

In new passenger car sales, electrics increased 43.2% in monthly comparisons (2,141 to 3,065) and 102.8% annually (14,533 to 29,479).

Hybrids rose 78.5% in December comparisons (1,771 to 3,162) and 7.4% annually (26,728 to 28,715) and PHEVs increased from 28 in December 2022 to 54 last December (92.9%) and from 412 to 512 (24.3%) in YTD comparisons.

The popular SUV category saw electrics rise 25.9% in December comparisons (2,938 to 3,698) and 205.6% annually (18,824 to 57,526).

Hybrids in that sector went from 5,311 to 6,699 (26.1%) and 55,087 to 69,704 (26.5%) respectively.

PHEVs jumped from 432 to 1,248 (188.9%) and from 5,525 to 10,700 (93.7%) in the same sectors.

Light commercial electrics went from five to eight and 53 to 212, possibly reflecting increasing availability.

ELECTRIC, PHEV AND HYBRID SALES					DECEMBER 2023			
Total Market	Month		YTD		Variance +/- Vol. & %			
	2023	2022	2023	2022	MTH	YTD	MTH	YTD
ELECTRIC								
Passenger Private	2,689	371	23,359	11,682	2,318	11,677	624.8%	100.0%
SUV Private	3,327	1,725	48,260	12,146	1,602	36,114	92.9%	297.3%
Light Commercial Non-Private	41	2	181	41	39	140	>999%	341.5%
Sub Total	6,057	2,098	71,800	23,869	3,959	47,931	188.7%	200.8%
HYBRID								
Passenger Private	2,495	1,113	22,516	21,436	1,382	1,080	124.2%	5.0%
SUV Private	6,692	5,748	56,402	44,766	944	11,636	16.4%	26.0%
Sub Total	9,187	6,861	78,918	66,202	2,326	12,716	33.9%	19.2%
PHEV								
Passenger Private	58	36	390	358	22	32	61.1%	8.9%
SUV Private	1,680	428	8,091	4,690	1,252	3,401	292.5%	72.5%
Sub Total	1,738	464	8,481	5,048	1,274	3,433	274.6%	68.0%
TOTAL	16,982	9,423	159,199	90,071	7,559	69,128	80.2%	76.7%