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MARCH 2024

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NVES AND THE NEW ZEALAND CLEAN CAR FIASCO



ROBERT BARRY

Hello there,

The Federal Government's proposals for the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard (NVES) have had a mixed reaction from the various stakeholders.

While all parties agree that there should be a standard, many differing views exist from the EV lobby and the automotive sector on how it should be structured and applied.

Having experienced the fiasco that was the Clean Car Discount/Fee and the Clean Car Standard in New Zealand, where the former Labour Government's idealism overran common sense, I have some suggestions to offer the current discourse.

THE NEW ZEALAND CLEAN CAR FIASCO

The former New Zealand Labour Government decided that New Zealand would be a global leader in emissions reduction and that it would incentivise consumers who bought electric vehicles and low-emission vehicles through the Clean Car Discount (rebate) and disincentivise people who needed to buy a ute or a van or a large SUV, through the Clean Car Fee.

At the same time, the Clean Car Standard saw OEM distributors penalised for not meeting a

lower average emission figure on a sliding annual scale, which could be balanced out by earning credits for low-emission or zero-emission vehicles.

The government ignored all advice from the industry about the OEM's ability to meet the lower CO₂ average on a sliding scale for the Clean Car Standard. It also ignored its own Climate Change Commission, which advocated a sensible timeframe that could align the country with European and American emission standards.

It brought in an average emissions target on a sliding scale two years ahead of Europe and America and, therefore, was going to be impossible for the OEM distributors to achieve, resulting in massive penalties, which would ultimately be passed to the consumer.

But then New Zealand had a general election in October 2023, and the Labour Government was out. The National-led coalition came in, and the Clean Car Discount (rebate) and the Clean Car Fee (tax) were scrapped on December 31.

After several years of market distortion due to legislative change at short notice, common sense finally prevailed.

While Ute buyers rejoiced that

they no longer had to pay a fee of more than \$5000, some distributors have found a yard full of unwanted battery electric vehicles without a \$7000 rebate, which they are now heavily discounting to shift.

But the Clean Car Standard matter remains unresolved, which is currently under review courtesy of NZ transport minister **Simeon Brown**.

So, to avoid a fiasco, the Federal Government needs to follow European and American emission standard timelines that the OEMs are working towards and create a workable standard that allows brands to sell a mixture of vehicles under a lower average sliding scale of CO₂ emissions.

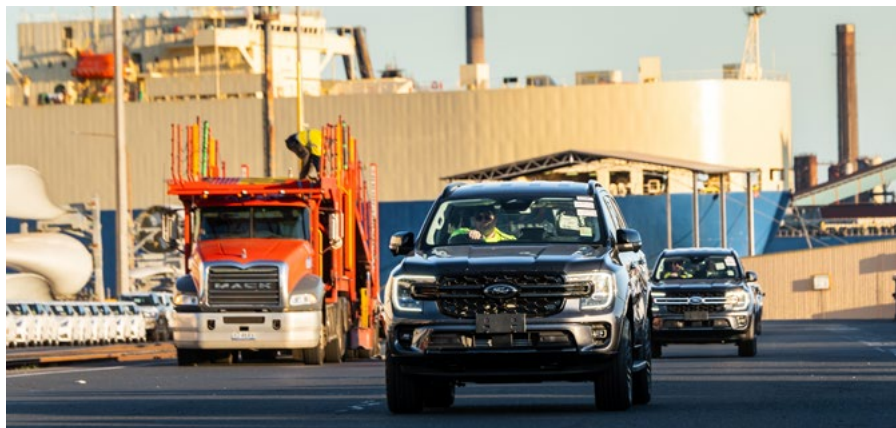
Forget about incentives or rebates. Electric vehicles are beginning to achieve parity pricing with ICE; letting consumers decide is better than distorting the market with generous incentives, which can lead to over-supply and lowered residuals.

But the most critical aspect is to design a fair and equitable timeline for everyone so that the market is not distorted, and OEM manufacturers can provide the required technology to meet the standard.

Enjoy your reading this month.

Kindest regards,

Robert Barry
EDITOR AUTOTALK



DEALER RESEARCH POURS WATER ON FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARD

New research about car buying intentions underscores the challenges of the Government's plan to reduce Australia's light vehicle emissions by 60% in five years.

The 'EV & Hybrid Vehicle Wave 2 Insights Report' released by the Australian Automotive Dealer Association (AADA) shows that electric vehicle sentiment is shifting at a trickle rather than a flood, while most consumers plan for their next vehicle to be an SUV or Ute.

The research is a second wave of tracking EV sentiments across the community following a similar study conducted in December 2022, collecting feedback from a sample of 2,000 Australian drivers (representative by age, gender and household location across Australia).

"The proportion of the market open to buying an EV has grown but represents only one in four buyers, as the strongest barrier to considering an EV remains the higher purchase price," AADA chief executive **James Voortman** says.

"Most buyers are looking at a non-

electric SUV or a Ute as their next vehicle. This is no surprise because these are the vehicles Australians love, but are also the cars most at risk of an overly aggressive vehicle emissions standard.

"It is also clear that consumers are less likely to buy a new one due to the current cost of living crisis. The last thing we need to do at this time is to further discourage consumers from buying new cars which are safer, cleaner and greener than the old cars they replace," he said.

"We urge the Government to study this survey and adopt an emissions policy that reduces vehicle emissions in a way that protects affordability, choice and the local automotive industry," he says.

Among the survey findings are:

- Two-thirds are going to keep their current vehicle for longer than initially planned due to cost of living pressures.
- Three in five are less open to paying more for EVs due to cost of living pressures.
- Respondents open to buying an EV for their main vehicle has grown from

21% in 2022 to 25% in 2024.

- Consumers are more likely to be intending to replace their main vehicle in the next three years (61%, up from 53%).
- The price premium consumers are willing to pay for an EV over a traditional fuel type is 8% up from 6%.
- More than two-thirds believe governments should be incentivising more customers to transition to EVs.
- 57% are not open to an EV due to the perception that EVs cost too much, but this is down from 62%.
- 62% of respondents say their next purchase will be an SUV or a Ute.

"This research confirms what we already knew, Australians continue to preference SUVs when considering their next vehicle purchase, are very conscious of price given current cost of living pressures, and intention to consider an EV on the next main vehicle driven is lowest when replacing large SUVs and utes," Voortman says.

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HYUNDAI AUSTRALIA BACKS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARD

Hundai Motor Company Australia (HMCA) has taken the country's new vehicle distribution industry by surprise by issuing a public statement that it has welcomed the Federal Government's impact analysis for the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard (NVES).

HMCA says it is committed to working with the Federal Government and industry to ensure Australian consumers get access to the widest range of affordable low- and zero-emission vehicles.

"We see this as an intriguing challenge, and we look forward to responding to the Government's call for feedback," Hyundai Australia chief operating officer **John Kett** says.

"We think we will soon have a world-class efficiency standard in Australia and we're excited by that.

"With the standard in place, Hyundai dealers will still have great vehicles to sell, customers will have great vehicles to drive, and we will be doing our bit to reduce emissions in line with Australia's commitment to decarbonise," Kett says.

"We only have five years to catch up to other advanced markets that have



had efficiency standards in place for decades, and that's a challenge. We see merit in the Government's preferred Option B, and with some minor aspects of Option A introduced to it, we can hit the proposed target and bring accessible, affordable and efficient vehicles to the market."

Hyundai says its vision for the rapid development of sustainable transport technologies aligns with the ambition of the Australian Government's proposed NVES policy.

"The Government has been confronted with many competing voices and opinions throughout this process, and

treading a workable path through all the noise will not be easy," Kett says.

"A world-class Standard demands world-class thinking around the commercial pressures and infrastructure challenges we jointly face.

"We applaud the ambition of the policy, and with the input of all the major stakeholders who have a role to play in its development, we're confident that the Government will get the NVES right for all Australian new car buyers," he says.

THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO PUT THE PEDAL TO THE METAL

The Climate Council believes the Federal Government needs to put the pedal to the metal and deliver its proposed fuel efficiency standard (NVES) so that Australians see the same benefits enjoyed by overseas drivers.

According to the latest Climate Council analysis, Australian motorists could pay up to twice the petrol price when purchasing a new car compared to international car markets with effective fuel efficiency standards.

The Climate Council says on average, a new passenger car sold today in Australia will consume 6.9 litres of fuel per 100 kilometres (L/100km), leading to an annual petrol bill of almost \$1,460. This is nearly \$720 more per year than new European cars, which use just 3.5L/100km, and almost \$570 more than new American or Chinese cars which use

4.2L/100km.

It says new utes and vans in Australia use 9.9L/100km on average, resulting in an annual petrol bill of almost \$2,880. This is \$1,250 more every year than equivalent new vehicles in Europe or China, where average fuel efficiency is 5.6L/100km and nearly \$1,110 more than in the United States.

Petrol prices are one of the top three causes of household financial stress and a majority of Australians (71%) say they've changed their driving habits to manage the high cost of fuel according to the Climate Council.

"Our long-time lack of fuel efficiency standards makes us a dumping ground for older, less efficient cars. Australians are paying far more for fuel because we are driving inefficient petrol-guzzling cars the

rest of the world has rejected," Climate councillor and economist **Nicki Hutley** says.

"An immediate benefit of making cars more efficient is that the average new car will consume less fuel to drive the same distance, lowering fuel bills and helping Australians tackle cost of living pressures.

"An effective New Vehicle Efficiency Standard will bring us up to speed with the majority of the world that already has similar standards in place. Drivers in these countries are already enjoying the savings and choice of cleaner, cheaper-to-run cars that Aussies have missed out on for decades.

"It's time for the Federal Government to put the pedal to the metal and deliver this standard," Hutley says.

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DEALERS DISAPPOINTED WITH FRANCHISING CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW

The Australian Automotive Dealers Association says it is disappointed by the independent review of the Franchising Code of Conduct tabled by the Labor-led Government in Parliament.

The review by **Dr Michael Schaper** makes 23 formal recommendations and 34 implementation suggestions for the Albanese Government to consider.

"We are disappointed that the recommendations don't address many of the issues the AADA raised during the Code Review Consultation, in particular the need for strong protections against termination and non-renewal and the need for compensation for loss of goodwill upon cessation of a franchise agreement," AADA chief executive **James Voortman** says.

"The recent case between Mercedes-Benz Dealers and Mercedes-Benz Australia/Pacific Pty Ltd highlighted the current failings of the Franchising Code with the presiding Judge stating that further consideration of the terms of the Code and possible reforms are needed, and we are disappointed that this was not picked up in the review.

"It is frustrating that the review ignored these comments and the overwhelming evidence which suggests that franchising regulations in Australia continue to leave new car dealers exposed to exploitative behaviour."

"We are also disappointed that the review did not recommend the immediate inclusion of truck dealers in the automotive schedule. Many of the arguments made for specific protections for automotive dealers also apply to truck dealers, and we find it bewildering that the review did not recommend their inclusion in the automotive provisions of the code.

"While we consider that the review could have gone further to protect automotive franchisees, we welcome



JAMES VOORTMAN



MATT HOBBS

the recommendation that service and repair work conducted by motor vehicle dealerships should be explicitly captured by the Code.

"We also see merit in introducing a licensing regime to better regulate most aspects of the franchisee-franchisor relationship," he says.

The AADA will continue to engage with the Government on the details of the review and the need for strong protections for local automotive businesses.

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VOLVO BOSS: GET THE CX RIGHT: GROWTH FOLLOWS

Volvo Cars Australia managing director **Stephen Connor** says the brand's annual Pinnacle Awards of Excellence showcase dealerships which have put the customer experience first and foremost.

Volvo Cars Parramatta won the 2023 Major Metro Retailer of the Year award, with Volvo Cars South Yarra, as the first runner-up, and Volvo Cars Doncaster as the second.

Volvo Cars Mosman won the Metro Retailer of the Year award for 2023, with Volvo Cars Penrith runner-up.

Volvo Cars Southern Highlands was the winner of the Rural Retailer of the Year for 2023.

Connor says the clue is very much in the name of the award because the winners are the absolute pinnacle of excellent customer service.

"Get the customer experience right and the commercial results will always follow," Connor says.

"Creating an excellent culture means the best staff thrive and get even better at what they do, which delivers the best possible experience for every one of our customers – and that means

they keep coming back to Volvo Cars, and hopefully, tell their friends too.

"It sounds simple, but there's so much effort that goes into building a culture of excellence – and always looking to improve. It's the small details that make the difference.

"Pinnacle is always a fiercely contested program – and 2023 was no exception.

"In some cases it was extremely close, requiring a few re-checks and additional reviews of the data with winners and runners-up decided on the finest of margins.

"So congratulations to all of our brilliant retailers. Their efforts in 2023 helped power Volvo Car Australia to another record year, with more cars sold than ever before. The winners' reward? A once-in-a-lifetime trip to Wimbledon.

"Thanks also to Volvo Ambassador **Matt Shirvington** for helping to host the night and present the awards. A brilliant brand partner for the last 20 years and finally, thanks to all of our customers," he says.



STEPHEN CONNOR

...from page 05

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE MUST INCLUDE AN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY CODE

The Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) has welcomed the release of the independent review of the Franchising Code of Conduct but says there is a critical need to develop an Automotive Industry Code.

The release of the code of conduct review led by **Dr Michael Schaper** came at the same time as the MTAA Board, MTA, and VACC chief executives met with Ministers, Shadow Ministers, and MPs in Parliament House in Canberra.

MTAA chief executive **Matt Hobbs** says Dr Schaper's review of the Franchising Code of Conduct comes at a pivotal moment for Australia's automotive industry.

"The review helps further the conversation and following the

Federal Government's proposed Fuel Efficiency Standard, the importance of meaningful automotive franchising reform to protect Australian businesses from the proven power imbalances found in the industry, is critical," Hobbs says.

"Dr Schaper's review is a solid document, and we welcome the Service and repair work should be explicitly captured by the Code. It is important to note that the Independent Review was undertaken before the release of the Government New Vehicle Emissions Standard," he says.

"The MTAA will continue to advocate the Government and the opposition for the critical need to develop an Automotive Industry Code to ensure a fair transition to protect locally and often family-owned dealerships that are under growing pressure from global automotive manufacturers.

"The NVES will accelerate the transition of the Australian automotive industry to more fuel-efficient vehicles. It is well known that not all global car companies will be able to respond at the same rate across the world. There is a critical need to ensure that Australian businesses are supported with policies and programs that ensure a fair and just transition.

"The speed of the transition to low-emission vehicles in Australia has changed gears. The Government needs to ensure that the final legislated New Vehicle Efficiency Standard is supported by a suite of transition policies including an automotive industry code, skills and training and support for the whole supply chain including measures that address the relationship between body repairs and insurance companies," Hobbs says.

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CAA: JANUARY USED VEHICLE MARKET INSIGHTS

According to the Cox Automotive Australia (CAA) database, dealer retail used vehicle sales grew 14.7% in January, year-over-year, the best volume since June and outpacing the 5.8% growth seen in the still record-setting new car market.

At the same time, national dealer stock of used cars in the CAA database decreased for the second straight month, ending January 2.6% lower than at the end of December.

Overall, those inventories remain much healthier than they were during the COVID period, up 33.9% over January 2023.

That means consumers have substantially greater choice than they did this time last year.

What's happening? Supply pipelines opening on the new vehicle side have created more trade-ins and greater fleet turnover in the wholesale sector, thereby populating used vehicle dealer lots, says CAA.

It says automotive OEMs and their franchise dealers are placing more emphasis on the secondhand market than they used to, with genuine used vehicle programs now common.

The increase in used vehicle sales and decrease in used vehicle inventory across the month naturally saw the Market Days' Supply (MDS) of used cars dip from 68 days to 65 days, below CAA's 70-day benchmark.

MDS is a key metric used to determine if there's an undersupply or oversupply in the market.

RETAIL PRICING

In terms of pricing across the total dealer used market, 39.5% of used vehicles were discounted between the first advertisement and the sale, by an average of 7.0% per vehicle.

Pricing also showed some signs of stabilisation after 10 successive monthly declines, with the CAA Price Index down just 0.1% month-over-month (MoM).

The CAA Price Index finished January at 134, down from 134.2 at the end of 2023.

That means the average price of used vehicles (adjusted by list price and volume-weighted) is 34% greater than when the Index began in late 2019.

Though elevated above pre-COVID levels, prices across the market are down almost 10% from their August 2022 peak of 148.1, at the height of the (diminishing) new vehicle shortages.

January also saw the continuation of a theme, namely a tendency for



secondhand traditional passenger hatchbacks and sedans to be more elevated in their price index than other vehicle types, and a tendency for older vehicles to remain more elevated than younger ones.

These respective observations can be attributed in part to emerging shortfalls of quality passenger cars in the used market because of their long-term decline in sales when new, and increased consumer demand for older vehicles that are usually cheaper overall.

The CAA Price Index of all passenger vehicles (Toyota Corolla, Hyundai i30...) is 144.3, compared to 126.6 for SUVs and 133.9 for utes.

And regardless of vehicle type, the price indices tend to stay higher for older age brackets, as the below table demonstrates.

Top-selling used vehicles for January

1. Ford **Ranger**: Up 18.3% (MoM)
2. Toyota **Corolla**: Up 15.8%
3. Toyota **HiLux**: Up 14%
4. Hyundai **i30**: Up 20.7%
5. Toyota **RAV4**: Up 12.1%

In terms of major movers, CAA saw an 80.1% increase in sales of used and demonstrator MG ZS models aged under two years; a 49% spike in Ford Ranger sales aged two to four years; a 31.7% jump in Holden Colorado sales aged five to seven; and a 42.6% increase in sales of Hyundai i30s aged eight to 10 years.

The models with the most listings

1. Ford **Ranger**: Up 1.6% (MoM)
2. Toyota **HiLux**: Down 3.2%
3. Toyota **Corolla**: Down 3.9%
4. Toyota **RAV4**: Down 1.8%
5. Mitsubishi **Triton**: Down 3.4%

On the topic of an emerging inventory squeeze, CAA saw a 37.7% monthly decline in stock of used Toyota Corollas aged under two years and a 9.3% drop in Corollas aged five to seven years.

MANHEIM WHOLESALE SUMMARY

Manheim Australia posted strong results across its passenger and light commercial vehicle (PCV) auctions in January, getting 2024 off to a positive start.

Nationwide wholesale auction sales volume increased 37.8% year-over-year and 43.2% month-over-month, with the number of sold vehicles the second highest in a month since 2020.

According to CAA, Manheim observed a relatively even mix of vehicle types coming through its auction lanes in January, 34.3% being SUVs, 31.7% traditional passenger vehicles, and 31.4% pickups. A further 2.5% were vans and buses, and just 0.2% were BEVs or PHEVs.

CAA expects the share of battery-powered vehicles to grow in the coming years, with more than 120,000 new BEVs finding buyers since 2022, many to fleet buyers or on leases, with expected groundings to commence from next year.

It says Manheim is well positioned to handle this influx, with the company's US operation remarketing more than 48,000 BEVs last year alone.

While prices fell across most of 2023, we have observed them hitting a plateau more recently, with the Manheim Price Index sitting between 138.1 and 140.5 for five successive months and finishing January 2024 at 138.7.

To put this into context, the Manheim Price Index peaked at 167.6 in May 2022, meaning expected wholesale prices across all segments and age brackets at 17.2% down from their most inflated.

In terms of where these auction vehicles are sourced from, the main suppliers are fleet companies, OEMs, dealers, Government, financiers, corporates, and private sellers.



ISUZU GLOBAL CHIEF ATTENDS NATIONAL DEALER MEETING

Isuzu Motors global chief **Shinsuke Minami** celebrated Isuzu Australia Limited's (IAL) unbroken 35-year truck market leadership at the company's annual national dealer meeting in Sydney.

Minami became Isuzu's president, representative director, and chief operating officer in April 2023 when his predecessor, **Masanori Katayama** was appointed chairman and chief executive.

Minami's Australian visit came at a pivotal time for the company, with high industry expectations following the recent launch of an all-new range of light- to heavy-duty trucks including zero-exhaust emission models.

Isuzu Australia managing director and chief executive **Takeo Shindo** says the yearly gathering of "IAL and our dealer partners is where we celebrate our success and discuss our ongoing plans to provide the road transport industry with the market's leading product and service support offering".

Isuzu Trucks ended 2023 with another sales record, delivering 13,658 trucks for 28.6% total market share.

While in Australia, Minami visited major dealerships Westar Truck Centre in Melbourne and Suttons Motors in Sydney to get a first-hand look at Australian dealer operations, addressed IAL staff, and held meetings with key strategic partners.

Addressing the National Dealer Meeting, Minami commented on challenges facing the road transport industry globally, from technology advances to supply chain pressures and carbon-neutral objectives.

He acknowledged the sales performance of the local subsidiary and the role IAL plays as a leader in broader Isuzu worldwide operations.

IAL's Shindo says Australia was considered one of the great success stories for Isuzu globally.

"Isuzu is extremely proud of its long-term success in Australia, born from strong relationships both with the dealers and our customers.

"This is something that Isuzu continually invests in, ensuring we provide solutions to answer our customers' road transport needs.

"That includes the new models we have coming in the next few years which will deliver on the ever-changing requirements of the industry and customers alike," he says.

IAL director and chief operating officer **Andrew Harbison** says IAL supports "a vast array of road-transport applications and businesses operating across the myriad of Australian industries, but ultimately, our enduring success comes down to a very simple proposition—purpose-built product, sold, serviced, and supported by Australia's most comprehensive and professional dealer network".



He says Minami's visit is "an inspiration for the dealer network and marks the beginning of a hugely significant year as we commence the launch and release program of our all-new model range".

"The past 35 years have been extraordinary for Isuzu in Australia, and we see a bright future ahead for the company.

"As evidenced by this visit, we are fully supported by the very top people at Isuzu and that confidence is felt by the dealers, and ultimately, our customers," he says.



KIA EV9 IS FIRST ELECTRIC DRIVE CAR OF THE YEAR

Drive has voted the Kia EV9 SUV its 2024 Drive Car of the Year.

It is the first time in the award's 18-year history a fully electric vehicle (EV) has been named the overall winner.

Drive says the Kia EV9 is a significant step forward in EVs, offering a glimpse into the future of family-friendly, zero-emissions SUVs.

It says the win reflects growth across the market, with Australians buying two and a half times more electric vehicles in 2023 than the year before. Launched in 2006, the Drive Car of the Year is designed to showcase the best cars available for Australian drivers to buy.

Assessing hundreds of models each year and narrowing down the field to a group of cars leading their respective categories, the award is intended to take the hassle out of researching a new car for many consumers.

This year, Drive judges reviewed and

tested more than 400 new models that went on sale during 2023 to select the overall winner.

They whittled the field down to a list of 18 category winners.

"Drive Car of the Year continues to be a comprehensive Australian car awards program designed to deliver guidance for consumers on the best cars that are driving our industry forward," says Drive chief executive **Simon Halfide**.

"This year has seen the biggest step change in the history of the awards.

"Three short years ago we introduced the first fully electric category into the Drive Car of the Year which comprised of just three models.

"And here we are in 2024 with not only a market growth of around 90,000 EVs sold in 2023 but with an EV taking out both the overall award and all top three finalist positions," Halfide says.

"The EV9 presents the future that families are looking for. It remains highly functional and practical as a seven-seat SUV but offers cutting-edge

electrification for silent, clean, and cost-effective long-term ownership," says Drive content director **James Ward**.

"We know that not every buyer is ready for electric and that not every family is shopping at this price point, but the EV9 is worth the attention of every new car buyer for what it brings to the market and for the potential it shows around what will come next.

"This is the car that will set the tone for the next generation of Australian family cars," Ward says.

Kia Australia chief executive **Damien Meredith** says the EV9 is "a bold and confident, all-electric, upper large SUV featuring advanced technology, expansive battery range and performance, and a locally tuned suspension".

"The EV9 plays an important role as the halo model of a very diverse product range offering, and we appreciate the Drive judges recognising the exceptional and unique car that it is," Meredith adds.

DEMAND MORE FROM YOUR DMS

Any business owner will tell you that time is money, so why continue to waste it?

The wrong dealer management system (DMS) can leave your business wasting time on band-aid solutions, cause unnecessary inefficiencies, and impact sales.

Dealerships deliver vehicles with increasingly advanced technology and functionality to match consumers' growing demand and changing needs, so why shouldn't a DMS do the same?

With the right DMS solution, your dealership can automate, centralise, and streamline time-consuming daily processes so you can spend more time focusing on increasing the bottom line.

Throughout my years consulting within the automotive industry, I have seen so many businesses sticking with technology that simply isn't working for them, choosing to adapt their business operations to their DMS's limitations rather than investing in the right solutions for their business.

My time with Pentana Solutions has taught me that efficiency and success within a dealership demand comprehensive solutions tailored to meet the diverse needs of every facet of the business.

THERE ARE FOUR WAYS A SUITABLE DMS CAN GIVE YOU BACK TIME.

1. Automated Accounts Payable

Do you need help to keep up with the supplier invoices coming into your business?

Forget printing invoices and physically handing stacks of paper to people – digitise and automate the entire process through technology deployment.

Using an automated accounts payable solution, staff can seamlessly review, manage, approve, reject, and forward all invoices without printing a single piece of paper or manually inputting critical data into your accounting system.

2. Digital Document Archive

Managing a library of physical and digital documents is an inescapable reality of modern business.

So many dealerships get overwhelmed with repair orders, sales agreements, HR documents, and other physical documents that their business still requires.

A Digital Document Archive will help you digitise your documents with advanced indexing so that you can find them when you need them.

3. BI & Financial Reporting

We love our spreadsheets, but what value is your business missing by

sticking to this outdated technology?

Why settle for manual monthly reporting when you can leverage readily available BI solutions to identify and address issues as they arise proactively?

Through real-time, analytical reporting, your business can effectively manage exemptions to be proactive rather than reactive. Don't wait until the end of the month to get insights about your business; get them in real-time.

4. Secure Cloud Technology

A cloud-hosted DMS solution gives you safe and secure access to your business-critical information wherever and whenever you need it without compromising data security.

Moving to the cloud means no back-office servers in your business and instead trusting experts to manage your infrastructure.

Pentana Solutions has led the charge in DMS cloud technology, offering a comprehensive approach to handling your data.

Through our cloud, we give businesses flexible access to data while delivering enterprise-grade security. Data is your greatest asset, so the data management strategy within your company must be secure and up to date with the market-leading security software the market can offer.

Having a suitable DMS is not just a big business problem; it's an everyday business problem.

For more than 50 years, Pentana Solutions has worked with businesses large and small, from large, publicly listed organisations to single franchise dealerships.

Our consultative approach allows us to provide solutions perfectly tailored to each business's unique requirements. Backed by our dedication to constant innovation, we have consistently delivered cutting-edge technologies to the global automotive industry for half a century.

Leveraging our global footprint and experience, we continuously push the boundaries of what we can offer beyond traditional notions of a DMS to deliver the best solutions to help



BY MARK SCOTT
PENTANA SOLUTIONS
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANGER

businesses grow.

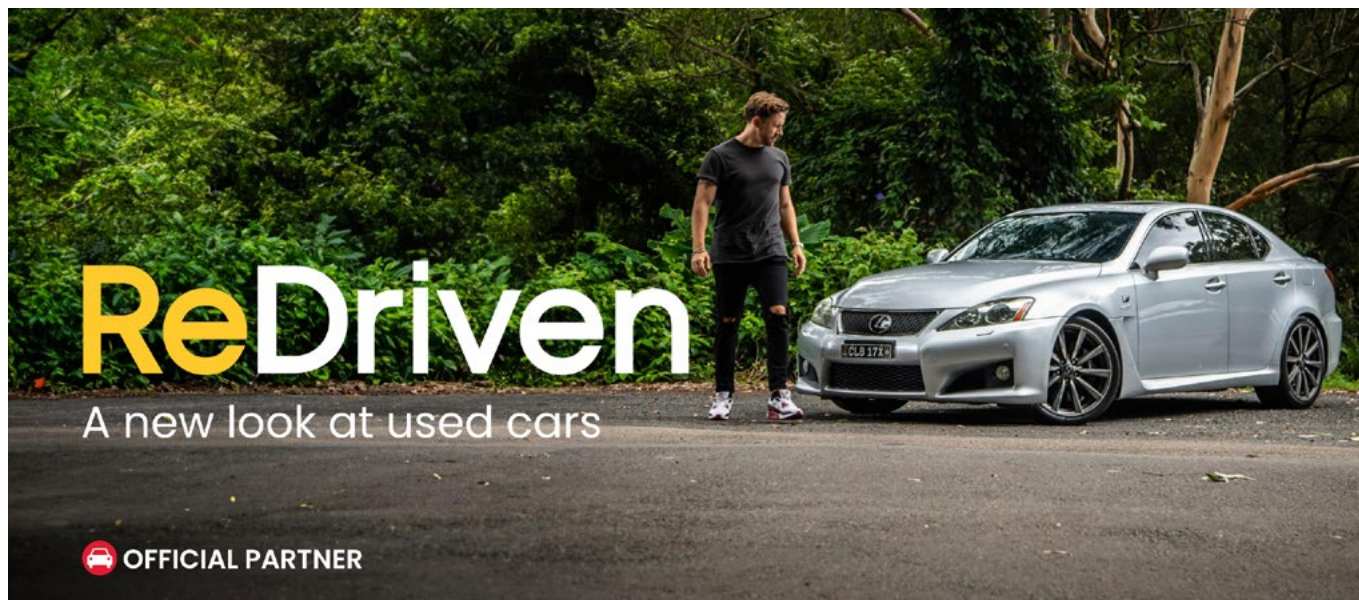
Standing at the forefront of technology, we pride ourselves on providing our customers with an accurate, end-to-end solution.

As the saying goes, "Work smarter, not harder". Make the time to review, understand and implement modern technologies in your business.

By making the call to change your DMS, you could completely transform your business – freeing up days of inefficient processes and reducing the hours of manual labour that are hurting your bottom line.

No matter the size of the dealership, Pentana Solutions has the right scalable solution to help your business reduce costs, increase efficiency, and drive productivity.





THE LATEST INNOVATIONS IN DEALER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

In an era where technology reshapes every aspect of our lives, we have to ask: Is the auto dealership industry keeping pace with this rapid evolution?

As the Director of Virtual Yard, I've closely witnessed the technological transformation in dealer management systems (DMS).

But as we delve into this topic, it's crucial to consider if we, as an industry, are fully leveraging these innovations for maximum impact.

THE NEW BACKBONE OF DEALERSHIP OPERATIONS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is no longer just a buzzword; it's become the backbone of modern dealership operations.

At Virtual Yard, integrating AI into our DMS has revolutionised how we approach tasks like vehicle ad creation and data analysis.

Yet, the broader potential of AI in enhancing customer experiences and streamlining operations remains a largely untapped goldmine.

This begs the question: How can the entire automotive dealership industry harness AI's full potential to not only improve operational efficiency but also to redefine the customer journey?

THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE OF INTEGRATED ONLINE MARKETPLACES

The integration of online marketplaces such as carsforsale.com.au into dealer management systems (DMS) is a move that transcends mere convenience—it represents a significant shift in market dynamics.

At Virtual Yard, our decision to own and integrate carsforsale.com.au into our DMS is more than just an enhancement; it's a strategic pivot towards cost-

effectiveness.

This integration offers a powerful alternative to the traditional, often expensive incumbents in the marketplace, providing dealers with more control over their expenses and greater flexibility in their sales strategies.

Is the industry ready to embrace this model, and what could be the collective benefits and challenges we might face?

PIONEERING CONTENT INTEGRATION IN AUTOMOTIVE SALES

Our exclusive partnership with ReDriven, the fastest-growing automotive YouTube channel in Australia, is a prime example of innovative content integration in auto sales.

With their expert reviews and massive, rapidly expanding audience, ReDriven is revolutionising how potential buyers engage with vehicles.

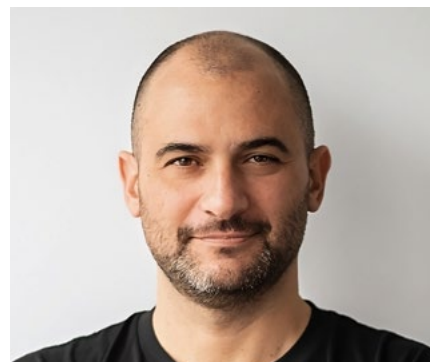
This collaboration isn't just about providing information; it's about creating a trusted community around car buying.

The industry must explore this phenomenon further – how can we all leverage such content-driven approaches to enhance customer engagement and trust?

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ADOPTING INNOVATIONS

While discussing these innovations, acknowledging the associated challenges is essential.

Implementing AI, integrating complex systems, and producing quality content requires substantial investments and strategic planning.



BY KADIR GANDUZ
VIRTUAL YARD DIRECTOR

As industry leaders, we need to collaborate, share best practices, and develop solutions that make these innovations more accessible and effective for all dealerships.

THE FUTURE OF DEALER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The future of DMS is shaping up to be more than just a set of tools; it's evolving into a comprehensive ecosystem that supports and enhances every aspect of dealership operations.

The potential for DMS to adapt to changing market trends and consumer behaviours is vast, and as an industry, we need to be prepared to evolve with these systems.

Embracing these innovations in dealer management systems collectively will be key to our success.

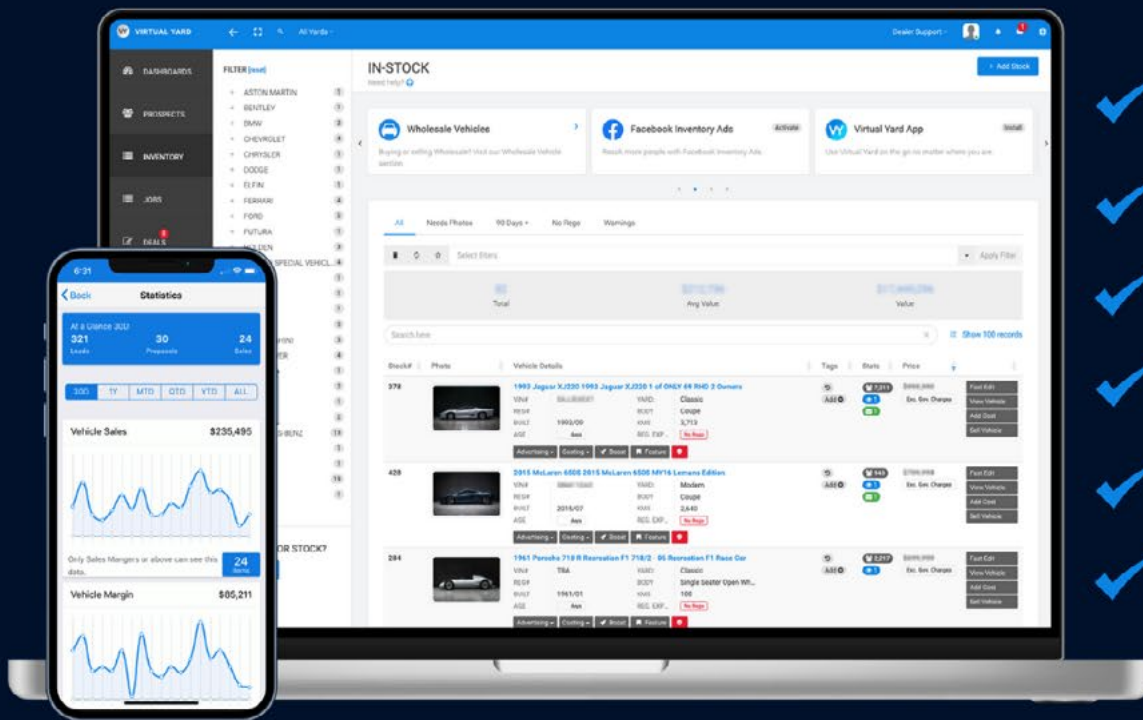
By sharing insights, tackling challenges together, and exploring new opportunities, we can ensure that the auto dealership industry not only keeps pace with the technological revolution but leads it.

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Dealer Management System

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- ✓ **GOV. FORMS**
- ✓ **ACCOUNTING**
- ✓ **ADVERTISING**
- ✓ **WEBSITES**
- ✓ **LEADS & CRM**
- ✓ **WHOLESALE**

virtualyard.com

EASYCARS: REVOLUTIONISING AUTOMOTIVE INTEGRATION

EasyCars by Jeal is an Australian, web-based, dealer management system that automates the buying and selling of motor vehicles.

Using the latest technologies, Jeal says EasyCars removes frustrations experienced at the dealership and opens the doors for greater growth.

It says EasyCars features include simple stock management, automated advertising, integrated accounting, government compliance, business reporting, Facebook automotive inventory ads, reviews management, dealership websites and more.

In the fast-paced, ever-changing world of automotive dealership management, finding streamlined solutions that integrate seamlessly with other renowned software programs is crucial according to Jeal.

It says EasyCars Dealer Management System (DMS) stands out for its exceptional integration capabilities, making it a top choice for automotive dealers aiming to optimise their workflow and enhance customer experience.

With Pickles recently acquiring Jeal, it says that exciting new integrations are on the horizon, that will continue to revolutionise dealer management.

The following is a deep dive into how EasyCars simplifies various aspects of dealership operations through seamless integration with accounting, advertising, finance, websites, and more.

STREAMLINING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Efficient financial management is key to the success of any dealership. EasyCars seamlessly integrates with accounting software Xero and MYOB, ensuring accurate recording and synchronisation of financial data. From invoicing and billing to payroll processing and financial reporting, EasyCars streamlines accounting processes, providing dealerships with a clear view of their financial health.

With EasyCars, dealerships can automate repetitive accounting tasks, reducing the risk of errors and saving valuable time. The accounting integration automates all industry-specific Tax rules like GST calculations for Notional Input Credits, floor plans and consignments.

EasyCars is the sole DMS provider in Australia to automate this process for clients. It is also the sole DMS with Xero certification in Australia. Less accounting costs, no costly mistakes, peace of mind, no hidden surprises.

ADVERTISE SMARTER, NOT HARDER

Attracting buyers and sealing deals hinges on effective advertising strategies. EasyCars revolutionary advertising module and integration capabilities make the process less time-consuming and less costly.

EasyCars integrates with over 28 leading advertising platforms, allowing dealerships to send their vehicles to select or all at the click of a button! Whether it's creating compelling vehicle listings, tracking ad performance, or analysing sales leads, EasyCars ensures that vehicle advertising is a breeze.

To top things off, the EasyCars advertising module leverages artificial intelligence to generate compelling ad copy within a single click. Say goodbye to manual input and hello to ads that not only capture attention but also deliver outstanding results. Car advertising made fast and made easy according to Jeal.

STRENGTHENING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

Building and maintaining strong customer relationships is paramount in the automotive industry says Jeal. EasyCars syncs seamlessly with leading CRM software AutoPlay, enabling dealerships to track customer interactions, monitor sales leads, and personalise sales effectively.

With EasyCars, dealerships can access comprehensive customer profiles, this wealth of information allows dealerships to deliver personalised experiences tailored to each customer's needs and preferences, making the sales process more efficient and more effective.

TAILORED FINANCIAL INTEGRATION

Already partnered with a finance provider? EasyCars can integrate seamlessly with a dealership finance broker's software, revolutionising dealer finance processes.

Imagine this: When a finance lead is entered into EasyCars, the integration means a finance broker's software ensures that the information flows



seamlessly, eliminating the need for manual data entry and reducing the risk of errors. This means faster response times, smoother communication, and ultimately, quicker deal closures.

ENHANCING ONLINE PRESENCE

With EasyCars, dealerships can create dynamic website experiences that showcase their inventory in the best possible light. The system's integration with dealership websites allows for automatic inventory updates as vehicles are bought and sold, ensuring that customers always have access to the latest information.

STREAMLINING VEHICLE APPRAISALS

EasyCars seamlessly integrates with vehicle appraisal software, streamlining the valuation process for both dealership and customers.

The system's integration with appraisal software enables dealerships to access comprehensive vehicle data, including market trends, historical sales data, and condition reports. This wealth of information empowers dealerships to make informed appraisal decisions quickly and accurately, maximising profitability and minimising risk.

DRIVING SUCCESS

EasyCars Dealer Management System offers a comprehensive solution for automotive dealerships seeking seamless integration with other proprietary software. From accounting and advertising to CRM, finance, websites, and beyond, EasyCars simplifies dealership operations, enhances customer experience, and drives business success.

EasyCars is your dealership in a box says Jeal. To learn more about EasyCars Dealer Management System or to arrange a no-obligation free demo, contact Jeal today on **1300 473 744**.



MORE ACCOLADES FOR MG4 IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Accolades for the MG4 electric hatch continue to flow in Australia and New Zealand.

It's been awarded the Royal Auto Club's (RAC) Best Drive small car category, and it beat nine other finalists to win the 2023 New Zealand Car of the Year, which is judged by members of the New Zealand Motoring Writer's Guild.

Since launching in Australia in August 2023, the MG4 has been praised widely and recognised, including winning the Carsales Car of the Year and Gizmodo Australia's Top EV of 2023.

The RAC's Best Drives annually recognises standout new vehicles, selecting from approximately 60 models that are road-tested by RAC throughout the year.

The program considers a range of essential factors, including value, safety, design, functionality, fit for purpose, fuel efficiency within class, ride, and handling.

The MG4's recognition demonstrates MG's commitment to making EV motoring more accessible for all Australians. With four variants providing a range of choices for motorists, along with the performance model, Xpower, the MG4 has proven widely popular with Australians.

"The MG4 is one EV that thoroughly deserves to play a major role in bringing EVs to the masses," says RAC Best Drive judge **Alex Forrest**.

MG Motor Australia chief executive **Peter Ciao** celebrated the MG4's recognition as a leading vehicle in Australia's small car category.

"It's supporting making EV driving accessible to more Australians. The recognition from the industry for its driving dynamics, ride, and performance shows the capabilities EVs hold.

"We're very honoured to receive this award from the RAC. Thousands of Australians are now enjoying driving their MG4 and we're excited every time we see one on the road," he says.

NEW ZEALAND CAR OF THE YEAR 2023

In winning the 2023 New Zealand Car of the Year award, which is in its 36th year, the MG4 has become the fifth consecutive electric vehicle to do so.

The previous EV winners of the New Zealand Car of the Year award were the BYD Atto 3 in 2022, the Hyundai Ioniq 5 in 2021, the Mercedes-Benz EQC in 2020, and the Jaguar I-Pace in 2019.

The New Zealand Motoring Writers Guild says that even before the XPower flagship arrived in the country in late 2023, the MG4 was making waves in Kiwi, not only among the buying public but also among the country's motoring journalists.

"We have all admired the design, technology, and practicality of the MG4, but how it drives has also impressed the motoring writers," the Guild says.

"Part of its dynamic charm comes from the mainstream variants being rear-rather than front-drive.

"This combines with the low centre of gravity and excellent weight distribution achieved by the positioning of its battery to give a crisp handling



balance," the Guild says.

The other nine vehicles that made the top 10 finalists for the 2023 award were the BMW i7, Cupra Born, Ford Mustang Mach-E, Hyundai Ioniq 6, Lexus RZ, Mercedes-Benz EQE sedan, Nissan X-Trail, Peugeot 308, and the Skoda Enyaq.

The Guild's voting members test the vehicles in their home environments across the country – important for providing a real world result.

They assessed the finalists on a specified range of criteria spanning how the vehicle performs its intended role; its styling, interior design and accommodation; fit, finish and quality; ride and refinement; performance; roadholding and handling; value for money; active and passive safety, and environmental responsibility.



USED CARS OFFER BETTER VALUE IN 2024 SAYS CARSALES

Carsales has announced its Best Used Cars Awards for 2024. It says moderating used car prices have injected value back into the market.

In recent years, it's been a seller's market for used cars, but with the market normalising and new car supply catching up with demand in the post-COVID era, prices have moderated, Carsales says.

It says generous savings can be had from buying a used car in 2024 – a vehicle costing \$45,000 when new six years ago could cost as little as \$20,000 in today's used-car market.

Mazda topped three of the 10 categories in the Carsales used car awards this year, followed by Toyota and Hyundai with two apiece, and one each for Ford, Porsche, and Skoda.

"From the most affordable small cars to luxury sedans and heavy-duty off-road wagons, key metrics considered were cost of ownership, safety, retained value and market appeal," says Carsales editor-in-chief Mike Sinclair.

"Mazda is once again the brand to

beat and between the CX-3, CX-5, and Mazda6, there's something for almost everyone – a fuel-efficient and enjoyable drive, a safe and comfortable strong-selling SUV, and a roomy family car with real-world performance.

"Cars up to six years old represent good value for buyers in the used-car market because they've been through the worst of their depreciation and have travelled only about 100,000km, based on an annual average of 15,000km per year," Sinclair says.

The Carsales Best Used Cars for 2024, are:

- Best Used Small Car: **2018 Hyundai i30 Premium turbo-diesel**
- Best Used Medium Car: **2018 Mazda6 Atenza**
- Best Used Electric Vehicle: **2018 Hyundai Ioniq Electric Premium**
- Best Used Small SUV: **2018 Mazda CX-3 Akari turbo-diesel AWD**
- Best Used Medium SUV: **2018 Mazda CX-5 Akera turbo-diesel AWD**
- Best Used Large SUV: **2018 Skoda Kodiaq 140TDI Sportline**

- Best Used Sports Car: **2018 Toyota 86 GTS**
- Best Used Luxury Car: **2018 Porsche Panamera Turbo S E-Hybrid Sport Turismo**
- Best Used Dual-Cab Ute: **2018 Ford Ranger Raptor 4x4 Double Cab Utility**
- Best Used Off-Road 4x4: **2018 Toyota LandCruiser Sahara**

The Carsales Best used cars are selected using a combination of expert evaluation and data from RedBook.com.au.

Every vehicle variant was assessed based on the following key criteria: six years old (2018) with 15,000km covered per year, and ESC (electronic stability control) as standard.

The RedBook data is formulated from the cost of ownership, safety, retained value, and market appeal. It comprises half the total score for each vehicle, and a score out of 10 from each of the five judges makes up the balance (out of 100).



MOTORS AND MASTERPIECES LAUNCHING IN MELBOURNE

A new event on the motoring calendar, Motors & Masterpieces, will debut at the Melbourne Showgrounds from November 22 to 24.

It's being curated by the team behind the popular Motorclassica event.

Chief curator **Mark Jansen** says the event is set to chart the history of the motor vehicle from its earliest days and into the future, with more than 300 cars and motorcycles displayed around six distinct themes that reflect significant evolutionary stages.

Included in this mix will be some of the most beautiful and historically significant examples gathered from Australia and abroad, with the exhibits competing for Best of Show honours.

In addition to the curated selection, the celebration will feature an extensive array of vehicles, totalling in the hundreds, creating a spectacle that promises to captivate visitors and showcasing the diverse and ever-evolving world of automotive innovation.

Jansen says the Melbourne Showgrounds provides the ideal setting for the event, with its range of indoor and outdoor spaces complimented by easy access and parking.

"Motorcars, motorcycles and



commercial vehicles are one of the major technical innovations of all time, redefining societies all over the world, including how we live, work and play," Jansen says.

"In addition to its utility value, the motorcar has also become an outlet for artistic expression and an enabler of cultural movements, from the streets of London or Milan to the beaches of Southern California. It's a symbol of civilisation.

"Through Motors & Masterpieces, we will tell this story with some of the most desirable vehicles ever gathered in Australia, with the entire festival promising to be a highlight of our motoring calendar.

"We aim to give automotive lovers a truly unique opportunity to see an outstanding collection of vehicles in

one location, with each example a true masterpiece," he says

Another feature of the festivities will be the Motors & Masterpieces Art and Photography Prizes, providing a platform for Australia's budding artists and photographers to display their works in front of a passionate public audience.

The Motors and Masterpieces website is now live: motorsandmasterpieces.com and entries are now open.

Exhibitors can also register via the website.

Sponsorship opportunities are also available and can be discussed with the organisers. Further details including ticket sales information will follow in the coming months.

GEN Z DRIVES THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

The demand for environmentally conscious solutions is gaining momentum across various sectors, and the automotive industry is no exception.

A new generation of consumers essentially drives this rising tide of sustainability awareness: Generation Z. Making up approximately 20% of the Australian population, Gen Z are increasingly taking the wheel and therefore, the industry must be ready to engage with this new generation of environmentally conscious consumers.

By listening to the evolving preferences of this influential generation, automotive leaders can pave the way for a future fuelled by economic growth and environmental responsibility.

THE DRIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE OPTIONS

Drivers across the world are looking for more sustainable motoring options. The surge in electric vehicle (EV) sales is an obvious example of this demand. Figures from the Electric Vehicle Council show interest in electric vehicles has grown significantly in the past 12 months, accounting for 8.4% of all new cars sold in the first half of 2023 – an increase of more than 120% compared to all of 2022.

This is also helped by a higher level of social understanding around the environmental impact of internal-combustion-engine (ICE) vehicles than ever before, with plenty of buyers willing to make a choice that aligns with their values and morals.

As well as greener vehicle models, motorists increasingly favour more ignorant insurance policies. Four-fifths of 17–24-year-old Australians (82%) told us they would stick with or switch to an insurer that can prove its sustainability credentials.

There's an opportunity for automotive insurers to offer greener propositions. For example, insurers should consider offering competitive premiums for policies prioritising repairs and green parts. They'll need to work with garages and body shops to make that possible

– and to help upskill them to take on more complex repairs.

EMBRACING A USED PART OF THE REVOLUTION

The fashion industry has done an exemplary job of redefining the perception of 'used' clothing as 'pre-loved'. This shift has benefited the environment and resonated with eco-friendly consumers seeking quality without compromising on their values.

The same revolution must happen in the automotive industry if it wants to continue to attract the environmentally conscious Gen Z.

The encouraging news for the automotive industry is that the foundations for this revolution among Gen Zs already exist. Solera's research shows 76% of 17–24-year-old Australians are ready to embrace pre-loved automotive parts, compared to 59% for all other age groups.

For those who wouldn't be comfortable, the top cited reasons are reliability (66%), longevity (61%) and safety (58%) concerns. Despite the pendulum starting to swing, there's a lingering stigma with 'used' car parts connoting 'inferior'. But used doesn't equate to scrap, nor do they compromise safety. They can be more efficient, sustainable, and cost-effective, doing the job as effectively as new parts.

To tackle this misconception, insurers, body shops, and garages are responsible for educating their customers. Garages should take note. By embracing sustainable changes, offering green parts as an alternative and catering to the needs of Gen Z, garages will gain a competitive



BY CHRIS IACOVOU
APAC MANAGING DIRECTOR AT
SOLERA

advantage and enjoy repeat business.

SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH THE WHOLE VEHICLE LIFECYCLE

In any industry, moving to more sustainable operations is complex. To bring about real change, sustainability goals must be factored into every stage of a vehicle's lifecycle, from birth to death.

Data – and the insights it generates – is the linchpin of a sustainable automotive industry and one of the biggest obstacles for businesses moving forward with sustainability efforts. For example, by using data and AI to assess vehicle damage remotely rather than driving to a body shop, technicians can diagnose and repair vehicles more quickly and without incurring emissions from going back and forth to the shop for assessments.

As more drivers seek sustainable options, providing services that align with eco-friendly preferences will attract more customers. The automotive industry must acknowledge that Gen Z isn't just demanding change; they're actively shaping the future.

Insurers, businesses, and body shops can't afford to be stuck in neutral. Collectively, we must recognise this shift in consumer behaviour and adapt accordingly.

ABOUT SOLERA

Solera is a global leader in vehicle lifecycle management software-as-a-service, data, and services. Through four lines of business – vehicle claims, vehicle repairs, vehicle solutions, and fleet solutions – Solera empowers its customers to succeed in the digital age by providing them with a "one-stop shop" solution that streamlines operations, offers data-driven analytics and enhances customer engagement.

AAAA DELEGATION SEEKS BETTER APPROVAL PROCESS FROM CANBERRA

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) recently led a delegation to Canberra to undertake discussions to support Australia's automotive manufacturing industry.

A delegation of ten second-stage manufacturers travelled to Canberra on February 7 to seek constructive dialogue with the Department of Transport and key members of parliament.

The AAA delegates highlighted the importance of the automotive manufacturing industry and how the current federal government approval process is affecting the industry's key fleet customers including mining, farming, and emergency services.

They believe that the current process of requesting approval for essential and routine commercial modifications before first registration is a difficult, time-consuming process for businesses which is strangling the ability of Australian automotive manufacturers to innovate and compete fairly.

This action from AAAA and the manufacturing delegates shows the importance and urgency of protecting the future of Australia's automotive manufacturing industry.

Since the closure of Australia's car manufacturing base, its automotive design and engineering expertise has pivoted towards the manufacture of 4WD parts and accessories to ensure that vehicles are modified to handle the country's unique terrain and climate.

"This process is killing what Australian engineering, design and manufacturing we have left," AAAA chief executive **Stuart Charity** says.

"Companies in our industry have already withdrawn from the market due to frustrations with the approval system.

"Unless the system is fixed, we risk killing off our domestic manufacturers, making it impossible for Australia to evolve and meet the demands of global automotive trends and the future low-emission global automotive industry.

"The current system is hurting many sectors, from farmers to our mining



industry, state and territory emergency service vehicles, and consumers who are looking to implement safety upgrades to deal with Australia's harsh terrain," Charity says.

The AAAA actively flagged concerns to the government about the potential negative ramifications of the Road Vehicle Standards (RVS) Legislation before its introduction in 2021.

"We were guaranteed assurances that second-stage manufacturers would not be left out and a clear pathway for second-stage manufacturers would be developed, but this did not happen," Charity says.

"Now it appears that a culture has developed within the Department of searching for reasons to block SSM applications. Combined with lengthy delays in reviewing applications, an ineffective IT system for mass commercial use and a very limited appeals process we are experiencing near catastrophic impacts for the Australian automotive manufacturing industry, and flow-on impacts for our customers.

"Australia is a world-class leader in vehicle springs, shock absorbers, brake components and many other important vehicle accessories. Australian companies are designing and developing these products locally and are exporting them to the world. This expertise enables the aftermarket to modify thousands of vehicles with upgraded systems to produce a final vehicle that is safe and fit for purpose and used by mining, agricultural and emergency service sectors," he says.

"There are some bureaucratic issues that are leaving Australian manufacturers playing a game of



chance with every approval. The current system lacks transparency, consistency, and accountability, all three aspects are needed for an approval process that is fit for purpose," AAAA government relations and advocacy director **Lesley Yates** says.

Amongst the delegation of respected automotive industry companies in Canberra negatively affected by the current legislation is Pedders Suspension.

"This issue is affecting the entire aftermarket industry and is having flow-on effects on customers. A functioning approval system that balances speed in processing and clarity for applicants is vital to the Australian Aftermarket's longevity, and we are fully supportive of AAAA's approach to getting the issues addressed," Pedders Suspension director **Mark Pedder** says.

The AAAA arranged meetings with several MPs and Senators during the trip, and the delegation was able to communicate the seriousness of the matter, encouraging the Government to act as a matter of urgency to support the future of the automotive manufacturing industry.



NEW LAW CRACKS DOWN ON UNSCRUPULOUS TRAINING PROVIDERS

A Federal Government move to crack down on unscrupulous and non-genuine training providers has been welcomed by the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA).

The AAAA says it “strongly supports” the legislation which will be used to remove dishonest and fraudulent trainers operating in the automotive training industry.

“We welcome this new legislation, which if passed, will make a positive difference to the automotive training sector and ensure new technicians are fit and ready to service and repair our country’s modern vehicle fleet,” says AAAA chief executive **Stuart Charity**.

“The legislation will clean up unscrupulous behaviour from the small number of dodgy providers that seek to take advantage of students.

“These providers undermine the vast majority of legitimate, proficient training organisations that are doing

a wonderful job training the next generation of automotive workers.”

The legislative changes will provide the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) with greater powers to prevent and remove non-genuine training organisations.

“Our industry is amid a significant skills shortage, so we must remove any impediments that reduce the legitimacy and competency of workers training to enter the workforce,” Charity says.

“The new law will address these issues, and ensure students are trained by reputable training organisations.”

The new legislation, the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Amendment (Strengthening Quality and Integrity in Vocational Education and Training No. 1) Bill 2024 was introduced into Parliament by Brendan O’Connor MP on February 12.

“We’d like to congratulate Minister O’Connor for introducing the Bill, and

his commitment to clean up what is an extremely important pathway process for young workers across the country,” Charity says.

“We look forward to engaging on the Bill, and we would appreciate any support from our members and the wider automotive industry as we take steps to crack down on these kinds of operators,” he says.

O’Connor says the Bill will restore integrity to the sector. “We’ll weed out dodgy providers that exist in the sector, who seek to exploit students for a quick buck and compromise the integrity and reputation of the entire sector in the process.

“Most providers do the right thing and are in the business of education and training for the right reasons.

“They’ll benefit from the removal of non-genuine actors, who undermine integrity and trust in vocational education training,” O’Connor says.



YUASA JOINS TYREPOWER V8 SUPERUTE SERIES

The Tyrepower V8 SuperUte Series has announced Yuasa Batteries as its official battery partner for 2024.

Yuasa is a global brand with a history of more than 100 years and is Australia's oldest battery manufacturer.

Headquartered in Brisbane, the company supplies passenger vehicle, light commercial, marine, deep cycle, heavy commercial, and standby batteries.

"We're proud to be now serving as the official battery partner of the Tyrepower V8 SuperUte Series, particularly with the opportunity to start the partnership at the Thrifty Bathurst 500," says Century Yuasa Batteries Australia and New Zealand marketing manager **Andrew Bottoms**.

"As a performance and technology leader, we aim to deliver trusted performance every time for our customers, which we believe aligns perfectly with the values of this fantastic motorsport category, which is also in constant pursuit of excellence on and off the track.

"Through our alignment with a genuine Australian motorsport category, we seek to further engage with our customer base with a thrilling brand of racing in all corners of the country at some iconic



Aussie motorsport locations," Bottoms says.

Also, Yuasa Batteries will be the presenting partner of various competition elements at each round including the Yuasa Pole Position Award which sees each pole-winner receive a \$1000 cheque at each of the series' six rounds.

"To have Yuasa Batteries partner with the series opens up a huge opportunity to connect with and support all of our racing fans who are enthusiastic about their cars, boats, and commercial vehicles," says category operations manager **Filippa Guarna**.

"Being one of the most market-relevant racing categories in Australia, that supports both the automotive workforce and fast-growing dual-cab consumer market, we're proud to include Yuasa Batteries in our racing program and help bring awareness to the products they have created," she



says.

The Tyrepower V8 SuperUte Series started with the Thrifty Bathurst 500, Mount Panorama, from February 23 to 25.

All races in 2024 will be broadcast on FoxSports and Kayo, and there will be free-to-air television on the Seven Network for selected races at the Thrifty Bathurst 500, Darwin, Bathurst 1000, and Gold Coast .

RETRO-INSPIRED LAND CRUISER PRADO ARRIVING MID-2024

Toyota has confirmed that the new Land Cruiser Prado range will arrive in Australia in mid-2024, with a new off-road focussed variant, 48-volt technology, and retro-inspired styling.

The 2024 Land Cruiser Prado range will build upon the line-up of the current generation with GX, GXL, VX and flagship Kakadu grades, and the addition of a new high-end Altitude variant aimed at adventure-focused customers.

The Prado line-up continues to open with the five-seat GX grade, distinguishable from the outside by 18-inch dark grey alloy wheels, an upper grille with 'TOYOTA' lettering, LED headlights and daytime running lights, retractable body-coloured exterior mirrors, darkened front and rear bumpers, side sills and wheel arches, and a manual tailgate with glass hatch.

Inside, the GX features fabric seats with six-way manual driver adjustment, a 7-inch colour MID display, automatic dual-zone climate control, all-weather rubber floor mats and a 220V power outlet in the rear.

Multimedia on all variants comes in the form of a 12.3-inch multimedia system with wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, satellite navigation with cloud function4, DAB+ digital radio, Toyota Connected Services and on GX, a 10-speaker audio system.

A full suite of Toyota Safety Sense active safety technologies are available across the Prado range, including a pre-collision safety system, adaptive cruise control, lane trace assist, blind spot monitor and rear parking support brake, as well as other welcome safety features including front and rear parking sensors, a panoramic view monitor, nine airbags, trailer sway control and a pre-wiring harness for the tow hitch.

Standard driving assistance technologies on all variants include vehicle stability control with active traction control, downhill assist control and crawl control with five selectable speed settings.

Stepping up to the GXL, adds roof rails, rear privacy glass, silver front and rear bumper trim and a powered tailgate.

Inside, the GXL adds a third row of seats for a seven-seat capacity, with



synthetic leather-accented upholstery and a 50:50 split-fold seat back for the third row. Front seats offer heating and ventilation with an eight-way power-adjustable driver's seat, genuine leather-accented steering wheel and shift knob and an auto-dimming rear-view mirror.

Improved convenience features include rear climate control, a wireless charging pad and six USB-C charging ports throughout the cabin.

Next up is the luxuriously specified VX, identified by its 20-inch premium dark metallic alloy wheels, body-coloured front and rear bumpers, over-fender moulding and rear guard trim, and bi-LED headlamps with dynamic auto-levelling and adaptive high-beam system technology.

The VX provides more amenities for customers with leather-accented seats with driver seat power lumbar support and memory, four-way front passenger power adjustment, power-adjustable steering wheel, carpet floor mats, a refrigerated console box and tyre pressure monitor.

A 12.3-inch colour MID display has been added along with a premium 14-speaker JBL audio system, while additional driving assistance for both on and off-road includes Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS), five-mode Drive Mode Select, and Multi-Terrain Select, which provides a comprehensive view of the vehicle's underfloor and surrounds when off-roading.

The new Altitude grade introduces several features designed to tackle the toughest terrain the country has to offer.

It also offers enhanced capability with the fitment of 18-inch matte grey alloy wheels with Toyo Open

Country all-terrain tyres, a rear locking differential, and a new stabiliser disconnect mechanism (replacing AVS) which provides an extra 10% of wheel articulation to help maximise traction on uneven surfaces.

It also features black door handles and tailgate garnish, black over-fender moulding, a moon roof and the option of two-tone colourways.

Available exclusively in five-seat configuration, the Altitude builds on the specification of the VX and inside, adds a digital rear-view mirror, heated steering wheel and head-up display.

Crowning the Land Cruiser Prado range is the seven-seat Kakadu, which also adds features over the VX including a panoramic moon roof, illuminated side steps, heated and ventilated rear seats, heated steering wheel, adjustable driver's seat thigh support, digital rear-view mirror, head-up display and a rear torque-sensing limited-slip differential to enhance handling when cornering.

All Prado variants are powered by the same 150kW, 500Nm 2.8-litre turbo-diesel four-cylinder powertrain with 48-volt technology, paired with an eight-speed automatic transmission.

Every Prado offers full-time all-wheel drive with a lockable torque-sensing Torsen centre differential and low-range gearing, with a 3500kg braked towing capacity across the range.

A total of eight exterior paint colours will be offered on the Prado including the new Altitude-exclusive Tanami Taupe and Ningaloo Blue, optionally available with a white roof.

Further details on the new Land Cruiser Prado including pricing and full specification will be announced closer to the model's arrival in mid-2024.

LEXUS CONFIRMS PRICING FOR LBX AND GX

Lexus Australia has confirmed the pricing of its LBX compact car and GX off-roader ahead of their future launches.

The LBX urban SUV arrives in showrooms on March 18, priced at \$47,550 plus on-road costs for the LBX Luxury 2WD.

Customers wanting more comfort and convenience may select the LBX Sports Luxury 2WD priced at \$52,990 plus on-road costs.

The LBX Sports Luxury AWD blends superior grip and handling with premium luxury, priced at \$56,990 plus on-road costs.

Lexus Australia chief executive **John Pappas** says the LBX is the first car in its class to combine hybrid efficiency with big-car luxury, making it a small car that is truly premium in every respect.

"It has all the luxury, craftsmanship, high quality and signature driving experience you will find in any car wearing the Lexus badge – at a remarkably tempting price," Pappas says.

"The LBX will attract affluent younger customers to the brand and provide another option for existing Lexus customers wanting to either downsize or have a second Lexus vehicle for casual weekend fun."

When the GX off-roader arrives from mid-2024 it will be the ninth all-new, or new-generation Lexus, to be launched in Australia in just over two-and-a-half years.

It caps off a product offensive that has revitalised the brand, with annual deliveries above 10,000 expected for the foreseeable future.

The arrival of the GX expands the Lexus luxury SUV line-up to seven models, each one distinctive to meet the diverse needs of Lexus customers.

Pappas says Lexus is pleased with the strong interest shown in GX through the Expressions of Interest (EOI) page on the company's website.

"We are delighted with the response to GX so far," he says. "It has genuine appeal in the way it delivers trademark Lexus luxury and craftsmanship with rugged off-road performance suited to harsh Australian conditions."

"The GX in Luxury and Sports Luxury



grades also provides customers with the flexibility of a third row of seats for urban family adventures."

The line-up opens with the GX 550 Luxury priced at \$116,000 plus on-road costs riding on 20-inch alloy wheels. GX Sports Luxury is differentiated with its 22-inch wheels and additional omotenashi comfort features, priced at \$128,200 plus on-road costs.

Slotting between Luxury and Sports Luxury grades is GX Overtrail, designed especially for the rugged outdoors with unique off-road driving features and all-terrain tyres fitted to 18-inch wheels. It is priced at \$122,250 plus

on-road costs.

In addition to Vehicle Owner Benefits of free Lexus service loan cars, vehicle collection & drop-off and capped price servicing, GX and LBX customers are gifted a complimentary three-year membership to Lexus Encore.

Encore adds a thoughtful touch of personal luxury with VIP offers through Lexus partner hotels and restaurants, invitations to exclusive events, movie and Ampol fuel offers, and DriveCare 24/7 roadside assistance.

The on-sale date for GX will be announced closer to its launch.

LEXUS LBX PRICING

LBX LUXURY (2WD)	\$47,550
LBX SPORTS LUXURY (2WD)	\$52,990
LBX SPORTS LUXURY (AWD)	\$56,990

LEXUS GX PRICING

GX 550 LUXURY	\$116,000
GX 550 OVERTRAIL	\$122,250
GX 550 SPORTS LUXURY	\$128,200



FEBRUARY 2024 NEW VEHICLE SALES UP 20% YEAR-ON-YEAR

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) says the sector delivered 105,023 new vehicles during February 2024, representing a 20.9% increase from the previous period in 2023.

FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber** says Australia's demand for new vehicles has continued into 2024 with another record-breaking sales month.

Toyota was the market leader with recorded sales of 19,374, followed by **Mazda** (7350), **Ford** (7275), **Nissan** (6617) and **Mitsubishi** (6411). **Toyota** led **Mazda** with a margin of 12,024 vehicle sales and 11.4 market share points.

The **Ford Ranger** was Australia's top-selling vehicle with sales of 5353, followed by the **Toyota Hilux** (4403), **Tesla Model 3** (3593), **Isuzu Ute D-Max** (2941) and **Toyota RAV4** (2843).

Sales across every State and Territory increased this month compared with February 2023. Sales in the Australian

Capital Territory were up by 19.9% (1,743); New South Wales by 15.7% (31,943); Queensland 21.9% (22,466); South Australia 16.3% (6,451); Tasmania 28.5% (1,817); Victoria 29.8% (28,415); Western Australia 15.3% (11,317) and Northern Territory 20.1% (871).

The February 2024 market of 105,023 new vehicle sales is an increase of 18,145 vehicle sales or 20.9% against February 2023 (86,878). There were 25 selling days in February 2024 compared to 24 in February 2023, which increased 581 vehicle sales per day.

The Passenger Vehicle Market is up by 3175 vehicle sales (19.3%) over the same month last year; the Sports Utility Market is up by 9885 vehicle sales (20.6%); the Light Commercial Market is up by 5015 vehicle sales (26.7%), and the Heavy Commercial Vehicle Market is up by 70 vehicle sales (1.8%) versus February 2023.

TOP 10 BRANDS



1. TOYOTA 19,374



2. MAZDA 7350



3. FORD 7275



4. NISSAN 6617



5. MITSUBISHI 6411

4X4 UTES



1. Ford Ranger
4771



2. Toyota HiLux
3887



3. Isuzu Ute D-Max
2417



4. Nissan Navara
1361



5. Mitsubishi Triton
1059



6. Toyota LandCruiser
70 Series
1115



7. Mazda BT-50
1062



8. Volkswagen Amarok
782



9. GWM Ute
743



10. LDV T60
391

SUV SMALL <\$40K



1. MG ZS
2357



2. Subaru Crosstrek
1254



3. GWM Haval Jolion
1202



4. Mitsubishi ASK
1060



5. Hyundai Kona
1024



6. Nissan Qashqai
974



7. Mazda CX-30
944



8. Mitsubishi Eclipse
Cross
862



9. Toyota Corolla
Cross
860



10. Kia Seltos
819

TOP 10 BRANDS



6. KIA 6141



7. HYUNDAI 5703



8. TESLA 5665



9. ISUZU UTE 4692



10. MG 4474



ELECTRIFIED VEHICLE SALES INCREASING

Battery electric vehicles accounted for 9.6% of new vehicle sales in February, while one in five vehicles sold were powered by low emissions technologies.

"Growing sales of electric vehicles across other market segments proves that where a battery electric product exists which suits the driving habits of Australian motorists, work and recreation needs they will purchase these vehicles," says Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) chief executive **Tony Weber**.

The Tesla **Model 3** was the third best-selling vehicle in February with 3593 sales, behind the top selling Ford **Ranger** (5353 sales) and Toyota **HiLux** (4403).

February 2024 VFACTS figures show electric, plug-in hybrid EV (PHEV) and hybrid new vehicle sales all increasing.

Total electrics sold in February were 10,111 units, up 70.4% on February 2023, and year-to-date (YTD) sales were 15,004 – 39.1% up on 10,784 sales for YTD 2023.

Slightly more hybrids sold in February.

The figures show 11,447 new hybrids sold last month – a 100.2% rise compared to 5218 sold in February 2023. YTD figures are almost as impressive – the 21,268 up 95.9% on 10,854 YTD 2023.

PHEV sales are improving too, the 1034 new PHEV sales in February up 127.8% on the 454 sold in February last year and 2014 YTD, up 125.8% on the 892 sold YTD 2023.

A further breakdown of electric sales

shows 5462 sold in the passenger category last month, up 78.6% on the 3059 sales in this sector for the same time last year.

About 8131 electric passenger vehicles sold YTD compared to 6290 previously – a 29.3% increase.

Hybrids reached 3876 passenger vehicle sales in February – a 186.1% rise on the same month last year, while YTD figures are 6902, a 162.3% increase on the 2631 sales recorded YTD 2023.

PHEV passenger sales were 58 in February, up 205.3% on the 19 sold in February last year, while YTD units were 131, a 197.7% increase on YTD 2023's 44.

In the popular SUV category, 4626 electrics sold last month, a 61.5% increase on the 2865 sold in February 2023, with 6834 YTD sales compared to

4482 YTD last year – up 52.5%.

Some 7525 hybrids sold in the SUV sector in February – up 72.5% on the 4363 sold in the same month last year, and 14,291 YTD – a 73.8% increase on the 8223 hybrids sold in this category YTD 2023.

PHEVs accounted for 876 February sales in the SUV category, up 124.4% on the 435 sold in February last year, while 1883 sold YTD in the SUV sector – up 122.1% on the 848 sold YTD last year.

Electrics also recorded a rise in the light commercial sector with 23 sold last month compared to eight in February last year, 39 YTD compared to 12 YTD 2023, and hybrids selling 46 in the light commercial category – up from zero for the same time in 2023 and recording 75 YTD.

	ELECTRIC, PHEV AND HYBRID SALES				FEBRUARY 2024			
	Month		YTD		Variance +/- Vol. & %			
Total Market	2024	2023	2024	2023	MTH	YTD	MTH	YTD
ELECTRIC								
Passenger	5,462	3,059	8,131	6,290	2,403	1,841	78.6%	29.3%
SUV Private	4,626	2,865	6,834	4,482	1,761	2,352	61.5%	52.5%
Light Commercial Non-Private	23	8	39	12	15	27	187.5%	225.0%
Sub Total	10,111	5,932	15,004	10,784	4,179	4,220	70.4%	39.1%
HYBRID								
Passenger Private	3,876	1,355	6,902	2,631	2,521	4,271	186.1%	162.3%
SUV Private	7,525	4,363	14,291	8,223	3,162	6,068	72.5%	73.8%
Sub Total	11,401	5,718	21,193	10,854	5,683	10,339	99.4%	95.3%
PHEV								
Passenger Private	58	19	131	44	39	87	205.3%	197.7%
SUV Private	976	435	1,883	848	541	1,035	124.4%	122.1%
Sub Total	1,034	454	2,014	892	580	1,122	127.8%	125.8%
Total	22,546	12,104	38,211	21,638	10,442	16,573	86.3%	76.6%