

THE AUSTRALIAN VEHICLE DEALER'S

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**SUBARU AUSTRALIA
CELEBRATES AWARD WINNING
DEALERSHIPS P.18**

FINALLY, A FUEL EFFICIENCY STANDARD



ROBERT BARRY
EDITOR AUTOTALK

The Federal Government is to be congratulated for grasping the nettle and announcing the National Electric Vehicle Strategy (NEVS) which also encompasses the formulation of a fuel efficiency standard for vehicles imported and distributed in Australia.

After the announcement my email inbox overflowed with reactions from all the usual professional industry bodies as well as some unlikely sources who wanted to add their 10 cents' worth to the conversation.

Let's be quite clear and frank about this. It's not going to be a quick process to lower transport emissions, unless the Federal Government follows the example set by the Labour Government in New Zealand which has accelerated electrified vehicle sales through significant financial incentives.

But the Clean Car Standard hasn't been welcomed universally by the NZ new vehicle industry which feels the Government has gone too far, too fast, too soon, and believes that eventually the consumer and the market will suffer.

The industry believes the New Zealand Government underestimated the speed at which electric vehicle sales gathered momentum in the last 18 months.

And now it's not gathering enough revenue from high-emitting new vehicles to subsidise the zero-emissions vehicles it wants in the national car park.

In spite of incurring a clean car fee of up to \$5250 depending on CO₂ output, the Ford Ranger and the Toyota Hilux remain the top two best-selling vehicles in New Zealand, followed in third place by the Tesla Model 3 which receives a clean car rebate of \$8625.

On July 1, this year the NZ Government will lower the rebate for zero-emission vehicles and increase the fees for high emitters as well as lowering the CO₂ threshold for the latter from 192g/km to 150g/km. The changes were announced on May 2.

If individuals or companies need a tool of

trade working vehicle such as a ute in New Zealand, they have no choice but to pay the Clean Car fee and accept it as a cost of doing business.

LDV does offer an electric ute, but it's expensive and doesn't have quite the same ability as a diesel ute yet.

That's at retail. Then the NZ Government has mandated that automotive distributors collect carbon credits or pay debits on their fleets' weighted CO₂ average which has to come down to specific levels by specific dates.

So, for example, Ford NZ is charged a fee on the Ranger and other vehicles that don't meet the clean emissions threshold.

But it will receive a credit for electric vehicles such as the E-Transit and the Mustang Mach-E, both of which are hardly going to sell in as much volume as the ute does.

Who is going to pay for the additional costs? The consumer of course.

It's exactly for this reason that Ford New Zealand has said it won't engage with the right-hand drive F-150 program and Toyota NZ says a right-hand drive V8 Tundra isn't on its radar. Under the new emission regulations, neither vehicle is tenable.

It'll be interesting to see if the GMSV and RAM right-hand drive truck programs will continue for New Zealand under the current distribution arrangement.

Toyota NZ has already begun restricting the allocation of Hilux ute orders and where possible it's shifting its direct clients into Highlander or RAV4 hybrids to try to meet the reduction targets/deadlines for the overall emissions of its fleet.

The Federal Government would be wise to analyse critically the New Zealand Clean Car Standard policy and implementation, especially the changes announced on May 2, and take those lessons for its own National Electric Vehicle Strategy.

Enjoy your reading this month.

Best regards,

Robert Barry
EDITOR AUTOTALK



MIXED REACTIONS TO NATIONAL ELECTRIC VEHICLE STRATEGY

The Federal Government's National Electric Vehicle Strategy (NEVS) and its commitment to develop a fuel efficiency standard for light vehicles have been welcomed by the Australian Automotive Dealers Association (AADA).

The roadmap is designed to ensure a better choice of electric vehicles for Australians, along with creating more and improved options for buyers of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles.

The AADA warns the devil will be in the detail but says it will participate constructively in the design of an Australian fuel efficiency standard.

"We believe the transition to cleaner and greener passenger cars can provide major benefits for consumers and businesses in the automotive supply chain," says AADA chief executive **James Voortman**.

"An appropriately structured fuel efficiency standard is an important element of this journey.

"The automotive industry is in fierce agreement that we need such a standard, but the detail that emerges out of the consultation will be critical.

"If we go too hard too fast, we risk undermining vehicle affordability and choice."

Voortman says that what's needed is "a policy tailored for Australia's unique circumstances as a small, right-hand-drive vehicle, full import market.

"The standard also needs to be considered alongside other EV policy initiatives.

"In the US for example, fuel efficiency standards exist alongside generous purchase incentives.

"The full suite of policies needs to inform our ambition in this massive transition.

"The AADA is keen to work with the Federal Government and other participants in the automotive supply chain to ensure the fuel efficiency standard is ambitious, but achievable, allowing Australians to access fuel-efficient vehicles, without reducing vehicle affordability or choice," Voortman adds.



JAMES VOORTMAN



TONY WEBER

HISTORIC STEP

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) says the NEVS announcement is a "historic step".

"Australia's automotive industry has been calling for a Federally led standard for many years and introduced its own voluntary scheme in 2020 in an effort to initiate some action," says FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber**.

"The Federal Government's announcement acknowledges the proposed scheme will be suited to Australia, apply all available emissions reducing technologies and ensure that Australian families and businesses are not disadvantaged in terms of choice and price.

"The questions and topics raised in the consultation paper highlight the complexity of the issue and demonstrates the Government has done its homework to ensure any future emissions standard is not a simplistic copy of an overseas standard but instead suited to Australia.

"The FCAI and its members will work alongside the Federal, State and Territory governments to progress the development of a fuel efficiency standard that reduces carbon emissions and encourages access to the world's best zero and low emissions vehicle technology," he adds.

MUCH WORK TO DO

The Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) believes the standard



GEOFF GWILYM

will bring Australians a greater choice of fuel-efficient vehicles, some of which are currently unavailable here because they're diverted to more accepting markets.

According to government figures, Australian new cars use 40% more fuel than equivalent vehicles in the European Union, 20% more than in the USA and 15% more than in New Zealand.

"The Albanese Government says the introduction of the Fuel Efficiency Standard could save Australian motorists \$519 per year in fuel costs. Consumers will welcome that, and we welcome it, too," says MTAA interim chief executive **Geoff Gwilym**.

"Australia lags behind much of the rest of the world in EV take-up and this needs rectification.

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"There is much to do," he says.

"Decreasing barriers to purchasing EVs, vastly increasing the availability of charging stations and networks, and tightening fuel efficiency thresholds for new vehicles.

"Industry also requires robust training for technicians and first responders to ensure safety and quality repairs and maintenance.

"Government should not underestimate the importance of a well-planned and supported transition for employees across the automotive industry to ensure they can adapt and re-skill.

"If this doesn't happen, we could lose up to 20% of small and medium enterprises."

STRATEGY CAN ACCELERATE PROGRESS

The Electric Vehicle Council says the Government must act swiftly and boldly to calibrate and enforce fuel efficiency standards.

"It's a relief that an Australian Government has finally committed to fuel efficiency standards, which have been operational in the US and Europe for decades," says EVC chief executive **Behyad Jafari**.

"Australia must bring in strong standards that keep pace with the modern world.

"If we squib it on the detail Australia will remain the world's dumping ground for dated, high-emission vehicles.

"From the US to Europe and across the ditch in New Zealand, strong fuel efficiency standards are providing drivers with more EV choice and reducing harmful emissions.



BEYAD JAFARI

"If Australia is serious about developing a local EV value chain to secure our future prosperity, the first crucial step to secure investment is to demonstrate we have a strong local market for these products.

"This will only be possible through the introduction of a globally-competitive fuel efficiency standard that accelerates local adoption.

"Australia has a bright and clean electric future just around the corner, but only if we get the policy settings right today."

AFTERMARKET IS CRUCIAL

The Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA), says the service and repair industries will be important in ensuring the EV Strategy succeeds.

"We look forward to constructive consultations on key elements of the strategy," says AAA chief executive **Stuart Charity**.

"We would like to see more detail



STUART CHARITY

in the future on how we are to meet the demand for EV service, repair, maintenance and training...

"Ensuring the availability of cost-effective spare parts, skills, and equipment to support the maintenance and efficient running of EVs is critical to the systems and infrastructure required to enable rapid EV uptake.

"The AAAA also welcomes the inclusion of funding to support New Energy Apprenticeships, however as demand for EV courses and trainers is now outstripping supply, we need more trainers and flexible training options for technicians located in rural and regional Australia.

"We'd value an opportunity to be involved in planning for a clear national EV training roadmap to support this transition, because right now, the EV upskilling effort is a highly fragmented and confusing landscape."



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LIESL KNOX

KNOX TO LEAD BRANDED FINANCE SERVICES AUSTRALIA

Branded Financial Services (BFS) Australia has appointed **Liesl Knox** chief executive officer.

Her appointment follows the company's strong growth.

Mark Mountcastle chief executive of BFS's owner Avanti Finance says Knox "will do an outstanding job as chief executive leading the next phase of growth for Branded Financial Services Australia".

"The board wanted to ensure we had strong leadership in place to continue to build on the platform that the Australian team have already created.

"Liesl is ideally suited to steer the business for future growth. Moving her family to Sydney reflects her commitment to this business," he says.

Knox brings more than 25 years' experience in the finance industry

and has held executive roles spanning legal, risk, strategy, planning, operations, and people.

Most recently, Knox was the chief risk officer at Avanti Finance, where she managed legal and regulatory affairs, risk management, and compliance.

In her new role, she'll remain an integral member of the Avanti Finance leadership team.

As the new BFS chief executive, Knox will be responsible for overall strategy, growth, and profitability.

"I'm thrilled to be given this opportunity to lead Branded Financial Services Australia," Knox says.

"I believe we have a fantastic team and a strong foundation on which to build."

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AUDI AUSTRALIA CELEBRATES DEALER ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2022

Audi Solitaire was named Major Metropolitan Dealer of the Year in Audi Australia's 2022 Dealer of the Year awards.

Hosted by Audi ambassador **Melissa Doyle** and Audi Australia director **Jeff Mannering**, the 16th annual Audi Dealer of the Year awards were held at Melbourne's Carousel.

"It's so important for us to take the time to celebrate our network and to recognise some outstanding performances from 2022," says Mannering.

"No matter what challenges we faced, I extend my thanks to all of our partners for their resilience and their patience when faced with a tough environment."

Audi Sutherland claimed first place in the Metro Dealer of the Year category. Audi Alto Central Coast claimed first place in the Provincial category, followed by Audi Centre Townsville who took home first place in the Rural category.

The evening also saw the presentation

of the Audi Foundation award, which recognises dealerships' engagement with the foundation's charity partners.

The 2022 Audi Foundation Award was presented to three winners rather than the customary one, illustrating the far-reaching impact of their efforts throughout the year.

Audi Centre Perth was awarded the Audi Foundation Award for Major Metro, Audi Alto for Pennant Hills took home first place for Metropolitan and Audi Alto Macarthur was awarded the Audi Foundation Award for the Provincial category.

Smith Family chief executive **Doug Taylor** was at the awards to represent the foundation charity partner and helped present the award to the winners.

THE OVERALL WINNERS AND PLACE-GETTERS FOR THE 2022 AUDI DEALER OF THE YEAR AWARDS WERE:

1st Place – Major Metropolitan Audi Solitaire

2nd Place – Major Metropolitan Audi

Centre Parramatta

3rd Place – Major Metropolitan Audi Centre Sydney

1st Place – Metropolitan Audi Sutherland

2nd Place – Metropolitan Audi Centre Mosman

3rd Place – Metropolitan Audi Alto Pennant Hills

1st Place – Provincial Audi Alto Central Coast

2nd Place – Provincial Audi Alto Macarthur

3rd Place – Provincial Audi Morningside

1st Place – Rural Audi Centre Townsville

2nd Place – Rural Audi Centre Wagga

3rd Place – Rural Audi Bellbowrie

1st Place – Audi Foundation Award Major Metropolitan Audi Centre Perth

1st Place – Audi Foundation Award Metropolitan Audi Alto Pennant Hills

1st Place – Audi Foundation Award Provincial Audi Alto Macarthur



ŠKODA AUSTRALIA DIRECTOR MICHAEL IRMER (CENTRE) WITH ALTO DEALER PRINCIPAL GEORGE SEVERINO (LEFT) AND GENERAL MANAGER PRAVEEN DEVARAJAN.

ŠKODA AUSTRALIA'S 2022 DEALERS OF THE YEAR

Škoda Australia has named Alto Škoda as its 2022 national dealer of the year and 2022 metro dealer of the year.

Škoda Australia director **Michael Irmer** says the Altomonte family-owned North Sydney dealership provided exceptional results "in all quantitative and qualitative measures of the business dealing with the customers to the highest standards".

Cricks Škoda won the 2022 award for financial services dealer of the year, while the 2022 rural dealer of the year award went to Ballarat Škoda and the 2022 provincial dealer of the year award recipient was Southern Classic Škoda.

Irmer says the geographical spread of the awards reflected the nationwide strength of Škoda's dealer network "giving customers a great experience wherever they live".

"A Škoda dealer's focus is on business sustainability and this is mainly based on providing a great customer experience, whether this is at time of purchase, financing or servicing," says Irmer.

"Strong results year on year build the Škoda brand in this market and emphasize the importance of our network in satisfying the need of the customer."

THE 2022 EXCELLENCE AWARDS WINNERS WERE:

Bayside Škoda
 Eastside Škoda
 Hobart Škoda
 Jarvis Škoda
 Kevin Dennis Škoda
 Lennox Škoda
 Mt Gravatt Škoda
 Peninsula Škoda
 Perth Škoda
 Sydney City Škoda
 Southern Classic Škoda
 Waverley Škoda



BMW ELECTRIFIED SALES RISE 81% IN FIRST QUARTER

BMW Group Australia registered 81% more electrified models in the first quarter of 2023.

BMW battery electric (BEV) models were up 112% compared with the first quarter of 2022 (458 units versus 216), with triple digit percentage increases for key models including the iX3 (175 units versus 86) and iX (255 units versus 84).

Fifteen BMW i7s – the first-ever fully electric 7 Series which launched earlier this year – also found new homes in this year's first three months.

With this growth in the local market, BMW led its key German competitors for market share of BEVs in the first quarter.

The combined total of BMW BEV and plug-in hybrid (PHEV) registrations jumped 45% during Q1 (551 units versus 381).

BMW will strengthen its BEV line-up with the imminent arrival of the iX1, which provides a new entry point to the world of fully electric BMWs while offering luxury features and a driving range of 440km on the WLTP testing cycle.

Later this year will see the local introduction of the most powerful fully electric BMW so far, the i7 M70 xDrive.

Mini, which will have a fully electric



product line-up by 2030, posted growth of 272% in registrations of its BEVs and PHEVs in the first quarter (268 units versus 72).

The Mini Countryman PHEV was up 370% (127 units versus 27), while the Mini Electric Hatch BEV continued its success story with a 213% increase in registrations to March 31 (141 units versus 45).

Australian registrations of all BMWs and Minis, including conventional powertrain variants, rose 4.2% in Q1.

Mini increased its volume by nearly 35%, while BMW recorded a 0.3% uplift in spite of supply challenges.

News of the local electrified registrations came off the back of the BMW Group announcing impressive growth in global sales of fully electric models.

It recorded an increase of 83.2% in sales of fully electric BMWs and Minis (64,647 units), while BMW more than doubled its BEV sales, with 55,979 delivered (up 112.3%).

The robust growth of BMW Group's electrified vehicles is in line with the company's approach to sustainability and reducing CO2 emissions with the ambition of becoming carbon neutral by 2050, the company says.



PREMCAR BUILDS 5000TH NEW CAR AT EPPING

Premcar has built car number 5000 on the assembly line at its factory in Epping, Victoria.

The milestone car was a Nissan Navara PRO-4X Warrior by Premcar, which completed its Australian secondary manufacturing on April 6, 2023.

The vehicle is part of Nissan's Warrior by Premcar series, a new-vehicle enhancement program that takes selected new Nissans and re-engineers and redevelops them for Australian conditions.

Dual-cab 4x4 Navara pick-up models from the PRO-4X and SL model grades are shipped from Nissan's overseas factories to Epping for secondary new-vehicle manufacturing and completion.

At Epping, the vehicles are fitted with Australian-designed-and-engineered components developed by Premcar for Nissan. Once completed, they're shipped to Nissan dealers.

"Car number 5000 means a lot to the Premcar team," says Premcar engineering director **Bernie Quinn**.

"In a very short time, the Warrior program has grown from the original Navara N-Trek Warrior to the current

PRO-4X Warrior and SL Warrior model variants.

"And with the Nissan Patrol Warrior's development program in full swing, we can't wait to add it to our local new-vehicle assembly lines and seeing it in Nissan showrooms across the country."

The Navara Warrior by Premcar program began in 2019 with the N-Trek Warrior by Premcar, Nissan Australia's first local new-vehicle enhancement program with the local firm.

The success of this engineered-and-built-for-Australia 4x4 dual-cab pick-up has continued with the award-winning Navara PRO-4X Warrior by Premcar, which was joined by the Navara SL Warrior by Premcar in 2022.

In September last year, Nissan and Premcar announced the Y62-series Patrol would join the program, becoming a new model in Nissan's Australian line-up.

The 298kW 4x4 Patrol Warrior SUV is currently undergoing its Australian re-engineering and manufacturing development program.

Premcar is scheduled to begin



manufacturing and assembly in Australia later this year.

The Nissan Warrior new-vehicle enhancement program follows a long line of OEM new-vehicle design, engineering, manufacturing and assembly programs performed by Premcar which turns 27 this year.

Ford, Toyota and Mazda have all benefited from Premcar's product development input, which ranges from small engineering projects to complete new-vehicle platforms and new-model programs for global carmakers.

CARS24 INVESTS \$5 MILLION IN REFURBISHMENT CENTRE

Indian online used car retailer CARS24 has invested \$5 million in a mega refurbishment centre on a five-acre site in Laverton, Victoria.

CARS24 says its high-tech Mega Refurbishment Lab (MRL) will create up to 150 jobs and provide end-to-end car refurbishments for customers nationwide.

The MRL is the second facility established by CARS24 in Australia and, at full scale, will refurbish up to 1200 cars to a like-new standard using a 300-point inspection.

By controlling the entire process at the new MRL, CARS24 says its customers can be certain of guaranteed quality and stress-free buying.

CARS24 says it invests \$2000 in each car to maintain strict mechanical standards and improve its appearance while keeping prices competitive.

The MRL is a crucial part of CARS24's business model that prioritises providing value to consumers by making buying a used car as frictionless as possible.

"The MRL concept fosters trust in our brand by ensuring high-quality cars,



which are a non-negotiable part of our offering," says CARS24 chief executive

Olya Rudenko.

HONDA FOUNDATION DONATIONS SURPASS \$14 MILLION

In the last 18 months the Honda Foundation has surpassed more than \$14 million in donations to fund organisations focused on helping needy Australians.

Since 1992 the foundation has been funded by contributions from Honda Australia and the 86 Honda Centres across the country.

For every new Honda sold in Australia, \$30 is donated to the Honda Foundation.

The foundation operates a 12-month loan vehicle program which includes registration, insurance, and all servicing costs.

The program is capped at 20 loan vehicles at any one time, but allows organisations who care for the disadvantaged, to accompany them to appointments and various other activities.

"The Honda Foundation has a strong belief in the power of helping others. We take on and embrace this responsibility by funding and empowering organisations that are focused on making a positive contribution to the community," says Honda Foundation chairperson Carolyn McMahon.

Over the past 18 months, the foundation has supported hundreds of causes.

From 2021 to 2022, end of year campaigns were run in conjunction with Movember, Starlight Children's Foundation, White Ribbon Australia, Head Space, Camp Quality, and the Leukemia Foundation.

The foundation has supported The Kidney Foundation for work to modify its Big Red Kidney Bus, which helps enable patients with severe kidney

issues and requiring dialysis to visit the bus for treatment.

A donation of \$50,000 was provided from The Honda Foundation to the Male Bag Foundation to fund a Transperineal Biopsy Machine which helps to provide a more accurate, in-depth prostate examinations.

Another donation was to Rapid Relief, to buy a customised barbecue catering pod for its dedicated teams in Queensland.

To apply for funding in 2023, applications must be submitted by June 30, 2023.

<https://www.thehondafoundation.com.au/application>

For information about past donations, please visit: <https://www.thehondafoundation.com.au/donations>



INDUSTRY WELCOMES QUEENSLAND'S INCREASED EV INCENTIVE

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) has welcomed the Queensland Government's policy announcement making the uptake of zero-emission vehicles more accessible and affordable.

The Government has doubled the incentives for zero-emission vehicles from \$3000 to \$6000 and increased the dutiable value from \$58,000 to \$68,000.

The announcement means Queenslanders (individuals or households) who earn up to \$180,000 per year are now eligible for a \$6000 rebate off a new EV up to the value of \$68,000.

And Queensland businesses are eligible for up to five rebates per financial year as an incentive to switch their fleets to electric.

FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber** says the announcement extends the Queensland Government's existing electric vehicle strategy that includes commitments in areas including fleet purchases and investment in recharging infrastructure.

"By increasing consumer incentives, the Queensland Government has acknowledged that affordability is the greatest barrier to EV uptake," Weber says.

"It's a step that's consistent with the issues raised in the Fuel Efficiency Standard discussion paper released by the Federal Government and provides an opportunity for even more Queensland businesses and families to

consider an electric vehicle...

"The FCAI will continue to work alongside the Queensland Government – and governments across the country – to achieve the primary policy objective of vehicle emissions reduction and increase the range of zero and low emission vehicles on our roads," Weber adds.

VICTORIAN MOTORISTS EXCLUDED FROM EV REBATES

Following the Palaszczuk Labor Government EV rebate announcement, the Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (VACC) is asking the Andrews Labor Government: what about Victorian motorists?

"The measures announced in Queensland put what remains of Victoria's paltry \$3000 EV purchase subsidy to shame," says VACC chief executive **Geoff Gwilym**.

VACC has argued that reducing significantly the upfront purchase price of electric vehicles is the most effective way to increase their uptake by private buyers and help reduce emissions more quickly.

VACC is calling on the Andrews Government to make available to Victorians similar EV rebates to those announced in Queensland.

"Being a richer state than Queensland, Victoria should be able to match these initiatives. So, where are they?" Gwilym asks.

"If the Victorian Government is serious about getting more Victorians into EVs and reducing emissions quicker,

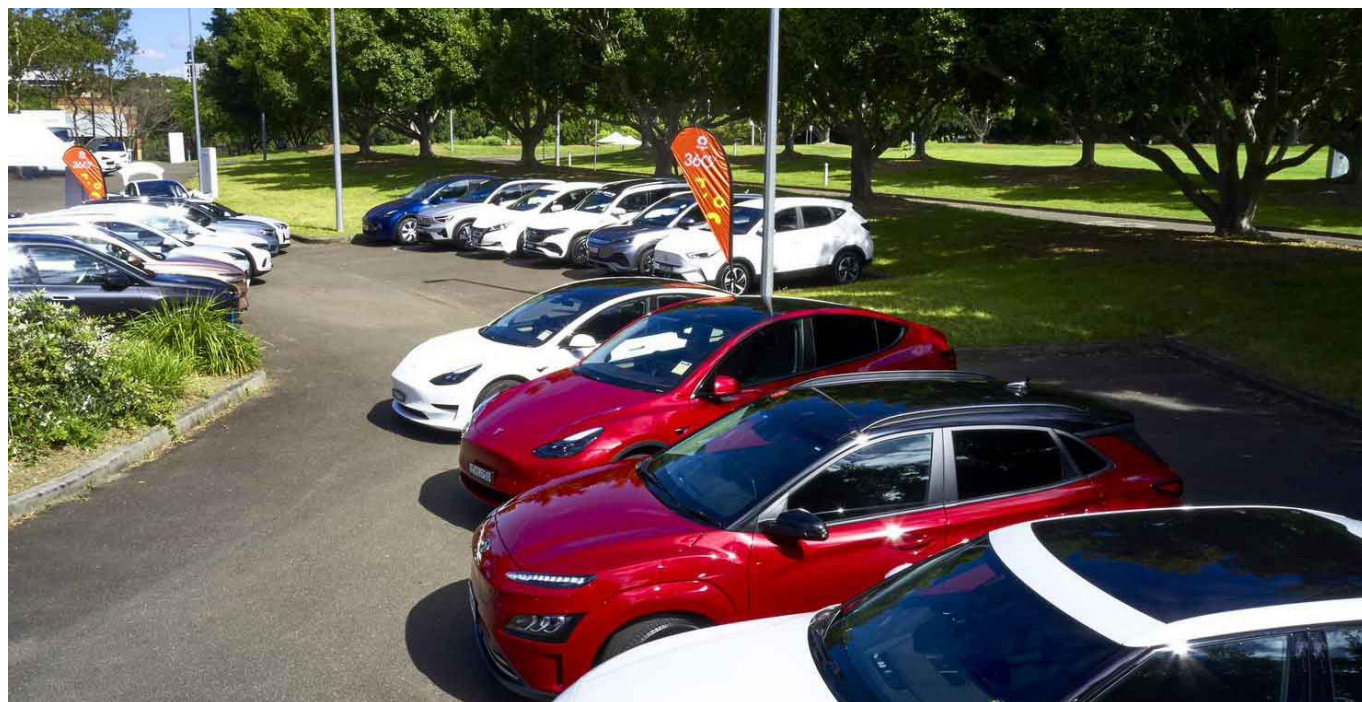


TONY WEBER



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a \$6000 EV rebate will achieve more than anything else Victoria has done to date."



EVS DOMINATE MEDIUM NEW CAR SEGMENT

Electric vehicle sales have overtaken petrol cars' in the medium-sized car category for the first time.

So says the Australian Automobile Association which says its EV Index shows that in the first three months of this year 58.29% of new medium-sized cars sold in Australia were battery electric vehicles (BEVs).

Australians bought 7866 BEV medium-sized cars in the first quarter – up from 2988 in the previous quarter – and BEV sales in the large car category more than quadrupled.

Total BEV large car sales rose from 69 to 313, and sales penetration (the portion of total vehicle sales) climbed from 7.49% to 22.14%, says the AAA.

Internal combustion engines (ICE) still dominate light vehicle sales.

But the EV Index shows that for the first time, quarterly BEV sales exceeded the sale of conventional petrol hybrids nationally – 17,396 compared with 16,101.

When compared to the final quarter of 2022, sales of new BEVs in all categories rose by 49.46% across Australia, says the AAA, adding sales rose in every state except Victoria (which had led the country in the previous quarter).

BEV national sales penetration rose



MICHAEL BRADLEY

from 4.54% in Q4, 2022 to 6.77% in Q1, 2023.

Although Victoria's BEV sales fell, BEV sales penetration increased there as light vehicle sales fell across all categories, says the AAA.

The figures were published just a day after the Federal Government released its National EV Strategy, including plans for a fuel efficiency standard.

AAA managing director **Michael Bradley** says the acceleration of EV take-up revealed in the new figures underlines the need for this blueprint for change to reduce carbon emissions at least cost to the motoring public.

"The shift is on," he says.

"We encourage political parties to work together to put all Australians in the best possible position to adopt low- and zero-emissions technologies that best suit their lifestyles, household budgets, and consumer needs."

"We need collaborative national leadership to manage our environmental challenges, maintain consumer choice, and ensure we can sustainably pay for safer and less congested roads."

The AAA's EV Index, launched in March, is an online dashboard that brings together seven different data sets showing the technical transition of Australia's light vehicle fleet.

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The EV Index shows how many EVs are being sold, which models are attracting consumer attention, the geographic distribution of EV registrations, vehicle specifications, and international list prices of 26 representative vehicle models.

The AAA has designed the EV Index as a tool to provide what it says is unbiased, credible, and up-to-date data on EV options and patterns of take-up.

GREEN CAR LOANS GET \$40 MILLION BOOST

The Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) aims to drive Australian EV ownership further through a new \$40 million investment that provides discounted finance for the retail Green Car Loan offered by Australian non-bank lender Firstmac.

CEFC investments to advance EV ownership in Australia have already supported about \$230 million of retail and commercial green finance, putting more than 3000 EVs and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) on to Australian roads.

The investment with Firstmac is expected to finance at least a further 900 EVs, with the discounted finance saving customers between an estimated \$1400 and \$2500, depending on the size and length of the loan.

The CEFC finance will enable eligible Firstmac customers to get a 0.5% discount for the life of their loan with a further 0.5% discount provided by Firstmac.

The total discount of 1% compares to the equivalent interest rate charged to Firstmac borrowers buying internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles.

To encourage manufacturers to make more EVs available, Firstmac is extending the discount to EVs priced under \$90,000, provided strong emissions standards are met.

The CEFC finance will be available only for the lowest emissions EVs, with the criteria for green EVs raised to exclude low emission ICE vehicles, conventional hybrids and plug-in hybrid vehicles with tailpipe emissions of more than 50g CO2/km.

"Electric vehicles are no longer only for early adopters," says CEFC debt markets head **Richard Lovell**.

"We know the dynamics of EV ownership are changing dramatically and more Australians want to buy EVs.

"However just 6.8% of all new cars purchased in Australia in February were electric, pointing to a big gap



CHRIS FARIS

between buyer preferences and vehicle availability," Lovell adds.

"Australia's uptake of new low emissions vehicles is also nearly five times lower than the global average, partly due to supply constraints.

"This is an important factor behind our decision to target our finance to EVs priced under \$90,000, subject to strong emissions standards, as well as to back the agnostic approach to vehicle manufacturer adopted by Firstmac," he explains.

"Together these factors should encourage manufacturers to make a broader range of EV models available to Australian buyers."

Firstmac managing director **Kim Cannon** says it has a policy of minimising the impact of its operations on the environment and leading the way on climate change.

"These popular loans are a valuable tool in the fight to cut vehicle-based emissions, because they mean that people can save money and help the environment at the same time."

Transport is Australia's second largest source of emissions, accounting for more than 18%.

Reducing emissions is critical to achieving Australia's reduction target of 43% on 2005 levels by 2030 and reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

Making EVs more affordable and expanding uptake and choice are important in meeting Australia's net zero targets.

Previously, the CEFC committed \$40 million in asset finance to offer Firstmac customers a 0.7% discount on low- and zero-emission vehicles, contributing to \$70 million in loans and the purchase of more than 1800 EVs and low-emission vehicles.

MORE INVESTMENT IN EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Australian Renewable Energy



RICHARD LOVELL

Agency (ARENA) will invest about \$70 million into funding the Driving the Nation Program aimed at fostering innovation in EV charging.

A funding package of \$146.1 million will be delivered by ARENA over five years to co-fund projects to decarbonise road transport.

Under the \$70m funding pool available now, ARENA aims to boost EV uptake through innovation in public charging and innovation in the management of charging.

Through those focus areas, ARENA seeks to promote innovation in technology and business case development in charging, and inform regulatory change and standards.

The funding will build on ARENA's previous support for EV charging networks, smart charging and vehicle-to-grid (V2G) charging, and programs for fleets, heavy and long-distance vehicles and to incentivise household smart charging.

ARENA will consolidate its EV charging portfolio under Driving the Nation, including network coverage and scale, easy customer access and use, and improving grid integration and capacity.

Since 2015, ARENA has announced more than \$140m in funding for projects to decarbonise transport, including fast charging stations, hydrogen refuelling and household smart charging.

ARENA acting chief executive **Chris Faris**: "with light vehicles accounting for around 11% of Australian greenhouse emissions, it's vital that we continue to fast-track the transition to electric vehicles over the next decade.

"As more EVs become available to Australians and their costs decline, it's important that the availability of high-quality charging infrastructure keeps pace with the take-up of EVs."



LAND ROVER NAME BEING RETIRED

In the next step of its Reimagine strategy, Jaguar Land Rover will be known as JLR, a House of Brands creating vehicles under the Range Rover, Discovery, Defender, and Jaguar nameplates.

This will see the quiet retirement of the Land Rover brand from the company's products.

The announcement was made by chief executive **Adrian Mardell** at a company-wide update presentation on April 19.

British magazine Autocar quoted chief creative officer **Gerry McGovern** as saying the formation of the House of Brands is a natural evolution, designed to elevate and amplify the uniqueness of the British marques.

"Our ultimate ambition is to build engaging experiences for our clients that will build long-term high equity for our brands and long-term sustainability for JLR."

McGovern says Land Rover would become a 'trust mark' for the Defender, Range Rover, and Discovery brands, Autocar reported.

"The reality is Range Rover is a brand and so is Defender.

"Customers say they own a Range Rover. In luxury, you need absolute clarity. Land Rover Range Rover SV Autobiography doesn't give it.

"We love Land Rover, but there isn't as much equity as Range Rover, and Defender is increasing massively," he says.



Reportedly, JLR will invest more than 15 billion pounds over the next five years in its industrial footprint, vehicle programs, autonomous driving, AI, and digital technologies.

The JLR Halewood plant in Merseyside, England, will become an all-electric factory and its next-generation medium-size SUV architecture will be pure electric.

In addition, the JLR engine manufacturing centre in Wolverhampton, England, will be renamed as the electric propulsion manufacturing centre.

JLR will retain the flexible modular longitudinal architecture (MLA) on which Range Rover and Range Rover Sport are built offering internal combustion engine (ICE), hybrid, and battery electric vehicle (BEV) options.

The first of three reimagined electric



Jaguars will be a four-door GT built in Solihull in England's West Midlands.

With a range of up to 700km and with indicative pricing from 100,000 pounds it will be built on a unique architecture, named JEA.

More details of the new four-door GT Jaguar will be released later this year, before it goes on sale in 2024, for deliveries in 2025.

MITSUBISHI RENEWS DISASTER RELIEF AUSTRALIA PARTNERSHIP

Mitsubishi has renewed its partnership with the veteran-led not-for-profit Disaster Relief Australia (DRA).

It will see Mitsubishi Motors provide DRA with 30 new vehicles to use on disaster recovery operations around Australia.

The partnership began in 2020, and since then, Mitsubishi has provided DRA with more than 32 vehicles, which combined have travelled more than a million kilometres on disaster recovery operations.

The fleet has been instrumental in DRA's ability to deliver its services to disaster-hit communities. To date DRA has helped more than 200 Australian communities.

Operations include flood clean-up in NSW and Victoria, bushfire recovery in NSW, cyclone clear-up in Tasmania and even the distribution of RATs and food parcels in SA during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new phase of the partnership will include the phased replacement of existing vehicles with new models and will provide an ongoing opportunity for Mitsubishi employees to volunteer and help DRA volunteers on operations.

Disaster Relief Australia chief executive **Geoff Evans** says Mitsubishi's support was instrumental in DRA being able to help communities devastated by disasters.

"Our partnership with Mitsubishi Motors is fundamental to our ability to serve the people of Australia," he says.

"As disasters continue to impact and devastate communities across Australia, our volunteers are required as never before to clean up in the wake of disasters and put communities back on a road to recovery.

"To meet this demand and to get our volunteers where they need to be when they need to be is a huge logistical task.

"It's one that requires planning, time and, of course, money.

"We look forward to this new phase in our partnership...not only to welcome the new vehicles but also to train, support and work alongside Mitsubishi



Motors' employees on our operations."

Mitsubishi Australia chief executive **Shaun Westcott** says the work that "DRA does in our communities is vital to not only disaster recovery, but also community wellbeing.

"Further to having our fleet of Mitsubishi vehicles in operations around the country, assisting communities in need, we look forward

to lending a hand and volunteering at operations."

Established in 2016, DRA unites the skills and experience of Australian Defence Force veterans and emergency service specialists to deploy volunteer disaster relief teams in Australia and around the world.



LOOPIT LAUNCHES VEHICLE SUBSCRIPTION UTILISATION (VSU) INDEX

Car subscription software provider Loopit has introduced a Vehicle Subscription Utilisation (VSU) Index, a monthly report on the growth and trends of car subscription services worldwide.

The data, based on Loopit's car subscription clients, emphasises the growing demand for flexible vehicle ownership alternatives.

The VSU Index aims to uncover opportunities in the car subscription market, offering transparency around vehicle types, makes, models, and durations of subscriptions, reflecting the latest preferences among consumers and businesses.

It focuses on measuring vehicle use within car subscription services, rather than tracking individual vehicle volume.

Given the flexibility of car subscriptions, the index evaluates vehicle utilisation by calculating the cumulative number of days a specific vehicle is subscribed during a month.

This approach ensures a comprehensive assessment of vehicle utilisation, recording vehicles that are utilised across multiple subscribers and those that remain with the same subscriber for extended durations.

Car subscription services have gained significant traction over the past year, with the Loopit platform now managing more than 37,000 vehicles worldwide.

"The VSU is designed to offer insights not only into the local market but also to provide a broader perspective on the global growth of car subscription services," says Loopit co-founder and managing director **Michael Higgins**.

"By taking a global approach, Loopit hopes to provide valuable information that can benefit businesses and consumers across various regions."

The increasing popularity of commercial vehicles underscores the shift towards car subscriptions as a flexible, short-term option.

Latest data shows that commercial vehicles hold the top three spots in the Top Subscribed Vehicles over US\$30,000 category.

"The monthly VSU report aims to highlight the growing demand for flexible car ownership alternatives among consumers and businesses," Higgins says.

"By shedding light on the positive developments in the car subscription industry, Loopit intends to foster greater awareness and understanding

of this service."

As car subscription services emerge as a flexible alternative to ownership, automotive brands and dealers can leverage this opportunity to provide their customers with a wider range of mobility choices.

Loopit was born out of the vision of brothers **Michael** and **Paul Higgins**, who founded Australia's first online-only used car dealership, HelloCars, in 2015.

The brothers recognised the growing demand for flexible and affordable alternatives to ownership, leading to the launch of HelloCars' subscription service in early 2019.

Its success not only attracted consumers, but garnered interest from fellow automotive industry professionals looking to offer their own subscription services.

In response, the Higgins brothers developed Loopit, a complete end-to-end solution for subscribing and managing a vehicle fleet.

Headquartered in Sydney, Loopit serves automotive brands, car dealerships, and related industries in Australia, New Zealand, Britain, and the USA.

MCLAREN TAIPEI GRABS 2022 GLOBAL RETAILER GONG

Mclaren Taipei is the British supercar maker's Global Retailer of the Year 2022.

For the first time in the awards, dealers were benchmarked within their sub-regions, driving an additional competitive edge across all 41 territories where McLaren's are sold.

Announced at McLaren's global retailer conference in Woking, England, the award marks the fourth time that McLaren Taipei – managed by Yun San Motors – has been retailer of the year for the Asia Pacific and China region.

And it's the second time the dealership has won the global title.

To determine each winner, McLaren benchmarks multiple areas of business month-by-month using a digital scorecard.

Representatives from each of McLaren's 102 retailers travelled to Woking for the global retailer conference between April 24 and 26.

They met McLaren CEO **Michael Leiters** for a detailed look at the brand's future model line-up and business strategy.

McLaren Taipei will see its name engraved on the Retailer of the Year trophy which will go on display in the McLaren Technology Centre trophy cabinet at McLaren Automotive.

It will join trophies from the 60 years since McLaren was founded in 1963.

Regional winners will each receive a Premier Club trophy to display in their showrooms.

"McLaren Taipei and Yun Sun Motors have been a long-standing and successful partner for McLaren Automotive having first opened its doors to sell our first supercar right up to our latest," says McLaren chief sales and marketing officer **George Biggs**.

"Their achievement is a testimony to the team, its excellent sales performance and high standards of business operation."

McLaren Taipei brand general manager **Jerry Lin** says the company's "entire team works hard to excel in every area when measured against the high standards set by McLaren".

And it works "to deliver every day



GEORGE BIGGS, BRETT SOSO, ANDREW SKEY, SANDRO SINIGAGLIA, STEFFEN SCHMIDT, MICHAEL LEITERS



GEORGE BIGGS, PAUL HARRIS, TIMOTHY CHANG, ERIC LIN, MICHAEL LEITERS



GEORGE BIGGS, MIKE WARD, BRET BISSEY, NICOLAS BROWN, MICHAEL LEITERS

for the growing number of customers attracted to the luxury marque, whether that's for new supercar sales,

after-sales or pre-approved".



GLENELG'S EBLEN SUBARU WINS RETAILER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Eblen Subaru Glenelg in South Australia has won the 2022 National Subaru Retailer of the Year award.

Subaru Australia unveiled the winners of its 2022 awards at a 50th anniversary gala event held on April 21.

The annual awards recognise Subaru dealers that have demonstrated "exceptional customer service, commitment to the Subaru brand, and outstanding performance across all aspects of the business".

Eblen Subaru Glenelg has gone above and beyond consistently "to exceed customer expectations and has set the benchmark for seamless automotive retailer operations".

Eblen Subaru Glenelg dealer principal **Daniel Gonzalez** says he's "incredibly proud to receive this award on behalf of my entire team".

"I consider myself so lucky to go to work every day with a bunch of hardworking and driven individuals.

"I would also like to say thank you to the entire Subaru Australia team for their continued support of our business, and for the strong long-standing partnership."

The awards were presented to the winning dealerships by the Subaru



Corporation president **Tomomi Nakamura** and Subaru Australia managing director **Blair Read**. "We're delighted to recognise the outstanding achievements of all

our 2022 Retailer of the Year award winners," says Read.

"Congratulations to Eblen Subaru for taking out top-honours and to all our regional winners.

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"Each of these retailers and their staff have demonstrated consistent high-performance, dedication, and commitment to the Subaru brand and their customers.

"We're incredibly proud to have them as part of our Subaru family and thank them for their hard work and ongoing partnership with Subaru Australia."

In addition to the announcement of the 2022 National Subaru Retailer of the Year winner, Subaru Australia recognised regional winners who excelled in their respective areas.

THE 2022 REGIONAL WINNERS ARE:

- Northern – North Jacklin Subaru Mackay.
- Brisbane – Indooroopilly Subaru.
- Sydney – Tynan Subaru Sutherland.
- Eastern – Capital Subaru Fyshwick.
- Melbourne – Subaru Mentone.
- Southern – Eastern Subaru Lilydale.
- Tasmania – Buckby Subaru Launceston.
- Central – Eblen Subaru Glenelg.
- Western – Bunbury Subaru



FUND SIGNALS NEW CONFIDENCE IN AUTOMOTIVE MANUFACTURING

Australia's Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) has welcomed the passing of the National Reconstruction Fund Corporation Bill 2022.

The Bill will establish a \$15 billion Australian manufacturing fund, making \$5 billion available from the outset.

The fund will target transport manufacturing and supply chains for cars, trains, and shipbuilding.

Many Australian automotive manufacturers are well placed to benefit, leveraging their skills and knowledge to rebuild Australia's industrial base, the AAAA says.

"We're delighted to see the automotive industry specifically targeted in this new Fund," says AAAA chief executive **Stuart Charity**.

"Australia has a critical role to play in the global automotive industry and we believe new technology for vehicle propulsion will see our industry grow and increase in significance.

"With many of our members looking at ways to adapt their business for

the future, we're pleased to see this commitment which demonstrates that the Government has a strong focus on the whole of the automotive supply chain.

"We're gearing up for EVs, alternate fuels, and new modification kits for global platform vehicles.

"We have a vision in which Australia continues to play an important role in the world automotive market," he says.

Australian Automotive Product Manufacturers and Exporters' Council (APMEC), chair **Arnold Mouw** also welcomes the new Fund.

"The whole of the automotive manufacturing supply chain is interested in the new technology roadmap.

"If we're to keep up with and, indeed, lead the world in automotive and transport technology we need to be harnessing our home-grown initiatives and supporting our industries to have a vision for the future and make the right investments."

AAAA says it has long said the automotive manufacturing industry is



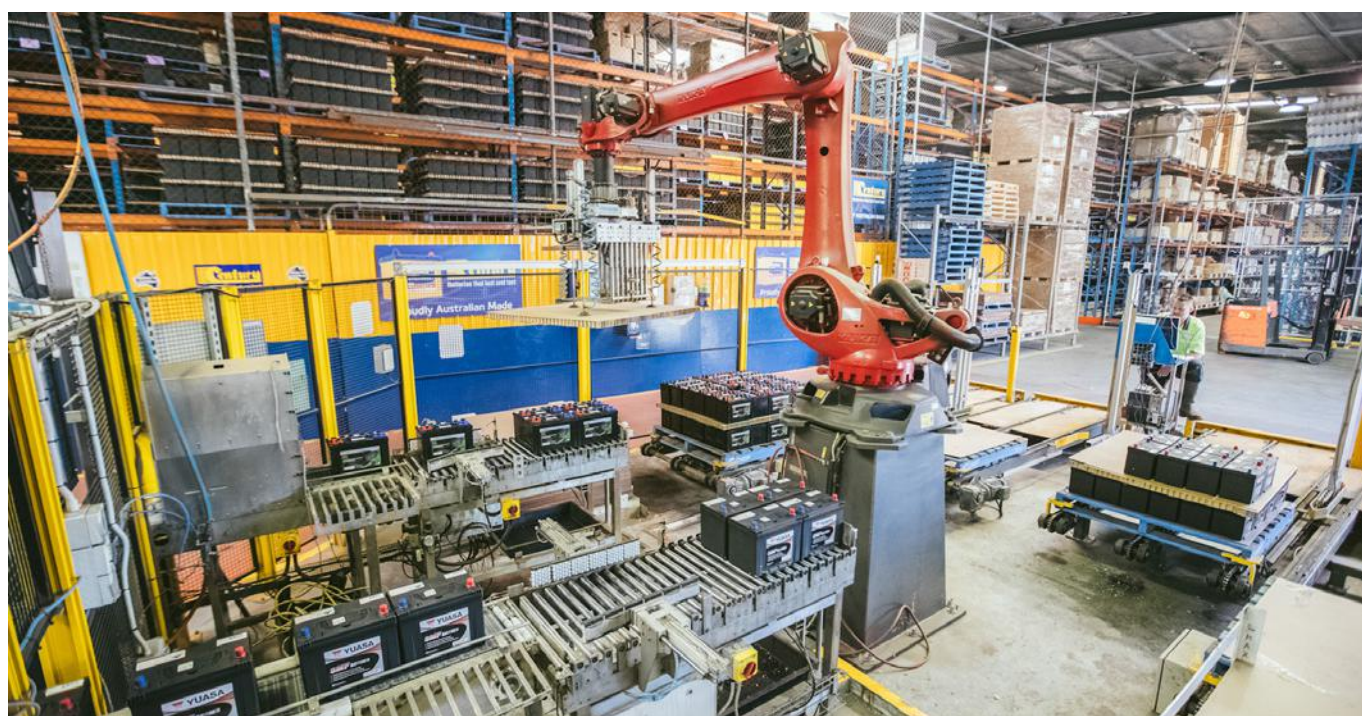
STUART CHARITY

missing out on targeted investment, causing some to go offshore to be cost-competitive.

It says this hurts homegrown innovation and R&D which is crucial for the nation to be a world leader in advanced manufacturing.

"We hope that with the passing of this Bill, many automotive manufacturers will be eligible for funding opportunities to expand their businesses and help build and maintain Australia's manufacturing self-sufficiency," Charity says.

"With the success of similar manufacturing funding models in other countries, AAAA looks forward to engaging with minister Husic on how we can best achieve shared goals for the automotive manufacturing industry," he adds.



DIAGNOSE ANY ISSUE BY MASTERING THE THREE FUNDAMENTALS

*Master technician **Brandon Steckler** is the technical editor of Motor Age magazine and an Instructor with CarQuest and WorldPAC training institutes.*

Ahead of his appearance at Autocare 2023, he talks about the diagnostic principles that make a difference in the workshop and why becoming friends with your local workshop competitors will benefit all parties.

HOW HAS DIAGNOSIS CHANGED SINCE YOU STARTED YOUR CAREER?

I enjoy asking more experienced instructors if newer or older cars are harder to work on? And it's a little bit of both.

Newer cars are more compact, and there's less room for access. However, the information available at our fingertips is a lot broader than in the past.

So, my diagnostic approach is always the same. What's the easiest thing for me to do? That depends on how the vehicle is built, if I can get my hands on it, and what systems it has. For instance, if I can get a hold of an ignition system with a distributor, it's very easy to get waveforms from which to analyse.

WHAT DIAGNOSTIC CHALLENGES DO TECHNICIANS FACE ON MODERN VEHICLES?

The challenges haven't changed much. From older to newer technologies, we need three basic things to be successful.

One, fundamental knowledge acquired from years of working on cars, and through education.

Two, have the right tools to evaluate a component or a system and the limitations of those tools. Knowing what they can do, but also what they can't do, is extremely important.

Third, and equally as important, is having access to appropriate and accurate service information.

If technicians can master those three challenges, there's nothing they can't diagnose.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL DIAGNOSIS PRINCIPLES TECHNICIANS SHOULD FOCUS ON LEARNING MORE ABOUT?

Eighty-five percent of vehicle issues can happen no matter the year, make, or model.

On the flip side, 15% of issues are related to how each manufacturer controls that component or that system.

For instance, an ignition coil makes spark the exact same way, no matter what car, because of the physics involved.

How that ignition coil is controlled, is different. You might have a two-wire coil that sets in a distributor, or a two-wire, three-wire, or a four-wire coil-over plug.

We might use an optical pick-up with a photocell, or an AC signal generator.

But the system fundamentally works exactly the same on all cars. I want technicians to master the 85% because it applies to everything.

WITH A TRANSITION TO EV AND HYBRID, HOW ARE US WORKSHOPS THINKING ABOUT THE SHIFT?

The diagnostic approach for EVs is the same.

First, understand the system, how it works, and the components that make up that system via training and service information.

We also need the specialised tools to evaluate these EV systems, including megohmmeters and milli-ohmmeters, safety equipment including PPE, and specific battery chargers and specialised vehicle hoists to remove batteries from EVs.

A technician's mindset should be the same as it's always been. Don't be fearful of the systems but be knowledgeable.

For EVs, it's a matter of investing in the future, whether it's a technician seeking training or a shop seeking tooling and equipment.

WHY IS MASTERING ADVANCED DIAGNOSIS SO BENEFICIAL FOR TECHNICIANS AND IN TURN WORKSHOP OWNERS?

Mastering advanced diagnostics isn't something I want anyone to do. I know it sounds counter-intuitive considering the event we're going to be teaching at, but I want you to master the basics.

Once you have that foundational training and knowledge second nature in your mind, advanced diagnostic capability will simply help increase efficiency.

It'll help you diagnose a problem more swiftly and you'll take fewer components apart.

It's important to understand that without those basics mastered, advanced techniques aren't going to work.



And if they do it's only because you memorised it without truly understanding and that's not the way I recommend you, do it.

Master the basics, and the advanced techniques will be your icing on the cake.

WHY IS BRINGING TECHNICIANS AND WORKSHOP OWNERS TOGETHER AT AN EVENT LIKE AUTOCARE SO IMPORTANT?

Equally as important as gaining knowledge in the latest tooling, testing techniques and technology is forging relationships with like-minded people, because knowledge begets new knowledge.

And when we forge these relationships, we want to help one another.

An example is the workshop across the street. They aren't your enemy.

Be friendly to that shop, help them, lend them tools if needed, and reciprocate by borrowing a tool from that shop if needed.

Order lunch for them one day so they come over and you can get to know each other better. Become allies.

When you do that, an amazing dynamic occurs, and everyone tends to learn together, raise the bar together, and that's a great thing.

Autocare 2023 runs from June 9 to 10 at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre.

LEXUS PITCHES LM MPV AT CHAUFFEUR DRIVEN MARKET

Lexus Australia will market two versions of the second-generation LM flagship MPV which debuted at Auto Shanghai 2023 in April.

Full details of the LM including launch timing, local specification and pricing will be announced later but it offers a choice of two hybrid powertrains.

Lexus Australia chief executive **John Pappas** says the flagship MPV offers customers "a private oasis of creativity and relaxation with rear-seat comfort and opulence unlike any other luxury vehicle".

Lexus designers' mantra was Dignified Elegance when crafting the new LM, combining an exterior design befitting a flagship MPV with a spacious and comfortable interior.

Alloy wheels are available in 17- and 19-inch, and globally, the LM will be available with a two-row, four-seat layout or a three-row arrangement with six or seven seats.

The crown jewel of the LM range is the opulent four-seat layout that places a partition between the front and rear seats for privacy.

The upper part of the partition features a plate of smoked glass paired with a 48-inch widescreen that can be used for online meetings as well as entertainment.

The flagship four-seat lounge features two rear captain's chairs with armrests and a retractable ottoman, with full heating.

The Lexus-first Rear Climate Concierge controls the air conditioning, seat position, sunshades, lighting and other features to create an optimal cabin environment.

The rear of the cabin is monitored constantly by a thermal matrix sensor that detects ambient and occupant temperature.

It estimates the temperature across four occupant body areas (face/chest/thigh/lower leg) and controls the air conditioner and seat heater to maintain a comfortable cabin.

The centre armrest offers a retractable table large enough to house a tablet or laptop computer, finished with a non-slip leather-wrapped surface.

Regardless of rear-seat layout, the new



LM aims to provide occupants with the same comfort found in a first-class airline suite.

It has climate control, seating, audio, lighting controlled through a detachable touch-type multi-operation controller.

Two multi-operation panels are available on the console armrests of the second-row seats to allow occupants to control their preferred settings.

Whether a four-, six- or seven-seat layout, all LM seats are designed to provide a natural and comfortable seating posture.

Front seats optimise the seat surface pressure distribution to hold the body in place regardless of the amount of G-force generated.

Second-row seats use two types of shock-absorbing material to cosset occupants whether the vehicle is moving or stationary.

Ambient interior lighting has a choice of 64 colours.

Lexus' exceptionally low interior noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) are key points of the LM, with engineers analysing the noise frequency bandwidth across different parts of the vehicle.

Engineers improved NVH by minimising

noise generated by the vehicle, preventing noise from entering the vehicle and reducing noise inside it.

A decrease in generated noise focused mainly on road and wind noise, with a particular emphasis on the wheelarches, bonnet, and pillars.

The engine and mounting system have been tuned to reduce vibrations and unwanted noise, and there is extensive sound deadening.

Exceptional ride comfort was a key development point, with engineers strengthening the chassis by 1.5 times with bracing applied to the radiator support, rocker structure, rear underfloor, and quarter pillars.

An upgraded version of Lexus' Adaptive Variable Suspension (AVS) uses frequency-sensitive valves to reduce vibrations in a wide range of frequencies.

A Rear Comfort drive mode has been added which prioritises rear-seat comfort while minimising pitch and roll during acceleration and deceleration.

There are two powertrain options: a 2.5-litre intelligent hybrid for three-row versions, and in the flagship four-seat grade a 2.4-litre turbocharged hybrid engine.



ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL MERCEDES-BENZ GLC ARRIVES

Mercedes-Benz's GLC is the company's best-selling SUV and the second generation arrives with a raft of enhancements over its predecessor.

Fans will discover updates that retain its exceptional road presence. New body-coloured wheelarches add extra visual presence, as do newly tapered aluminium-look running boards with rubberised studs, 20-inch AMG bi-colour alloy wheels, and larger front brake discs.

The interior has been overhauled radically, and the driver's environment follows the lead set by the C-Class sedan, banishing almost all buttons and switches.

Instead, a central portrait-oriented display screen becomes the focal point for most functions, including the latest generation of the MBUX infotainment system.

The exterior has been enhanced aerodynamically to reduce drag, with a Cd of 0.29 helping increase fuel efficiency.

LIFTING THE SPECIFICATION BAR

There's a wide array of standard equipment, much of it accessible previously in options packages.

That includes a panoramic sunroof and Head-Up Display; front seat electric adjustment, memory settings and seat heating, and AMG Line exterior and

interior enhancements.

A new GLC 300 feature targeted at driving on rough terrain is the 'transparent bonnet' which displays a picture on the central display screen showing any ground obstructions directly in front of, or directly beneath the front of the vehicle. It also shows the angle of the front wheels.

The Off-Road driving mode includes a new off-road screen showing an array of important data including incline, gradient, altitude and compass.

ENGINE: SYSTEMATICALLY ELECTRIFIED FOUR-CYLINDER

The GLC 300 features a 48-volt electrical system and second-generation Integrated Starter Generator (ISG), providing intelligent support at low revs.

The 48-volt electrical system enables functions such as 'gliding', boost or recuperation, enabling significant fuel savings (about 7.7 litres/100km compared with 8.2 litres/100km).

The ISG can provide an additional 17kW and 200Nm to the standard outputs. It also enables the engine to start quickly and quietly.

The combination of these systems ensures smooth power delivery for the turbocharged four-cylinder engine, which produces 190kW of power and 400Nm of torque 30Nm more than the outgoing model.

In combination with a 9G-TRONIC automatic transmission and 4MATIC all-wheel drive, that delivers a 6.2-second 0-100km/h time.

DIMENSIONAL CONCEPT AND PRACTICAL DETAILS

The new GLC is 4716mm, and it's 60mm longer and 4mm lower than its predecessor. Track widths have been increased 6mm at the front (now 162mm) and 23mm at the rear (now 1640mm).

Wheelbase increases 15mm to 2888mm and the overhangs at the front and rear are longer. Width remains 1890mm.

The luggage capacity benefits from the larger rear overhang and has increased significantly to 620 litres (up 50 litres). This is noticeable in day-to-day driving, also during holiday journeys with the family or for everyday transport requirements.

The rear seat backrest can be split-folded in a 40:20:40 ratio. Electrically operated unlocking of the rear seat backrest is activated by push-button switches on the left and right side of the rear seat backrest, or via controls in the load compartment.

The GLC has an Easy-Pack tailgate as standard. It opens or closes at the touch of a button on the ignition key, the switch in the driver's door, or the unlocking handle on the tailgate.



APRIL NEW VEHICLE SALES STEADY

Australia's automotive industry delivered 82,137 vehicles during April, a 1.3% increase (1072) on the same period of 2022 (81,065).

There were 22 selling days this April compared to 23 in April 2022 and that resulted in an increase of 208.9 vehicle sales per day.

The passenger vehicle market is down by 253 vehicle sales (-1.6%) over the same month last year.

The sports utility market is up by 3661 sales (8.6%); the light commercial market is down by 2576 sales (-13.1%), and the heavy commercial vehicle market is up by 240 sales (6.6%) from 2022.

Toyota led the April market, followed by **Mazda** and **Kia**. **Toyota** led **Mazda** by 5103 vehicle sales and 6.2 market share points.

SUVs and light commercial vehicles accounted for 76.8% of sales in April, passenger vehicles for 18.5%, and heavy commercial 4.7%.

Government and business fleet sales increased by 8.1% and 2.9%,

respectively. Rental sales recorded a decline of 11.4%.

Year-to-date, sales of vehicles sourced from China have increased 68.5% with 13,426 vehicles sold in April.

Japan remains Australia's largest source of vehicles (22,304). Thailand is the second largest (15,886) and Korea fourth (12,952).

Sales in the ACT increased by 5% compared to the same month last year, with 1261 vehicles sold; Queensland, 4.4% (18,188); Victoria, 4.2% (22,226), and Western Australia, 5.2% (8303).

Sales in New South Wales decreased by 1.5% (25,040); Northern Territory, 10.3% (761), and Tasmania, 13.3% (1271).

Toyota led the market with 12,029 vehicles, followed by **Mazda** (6926), **Kia** (6200), **Hyundai** (5732) and **Ford** (5047).

The **Ford Ranger** was the highest selling model with 3567 sales, followed by the Toyota **HiLux** (3526), Toyota **RAV4** (2198), Tesla **Model Y** (2095), and **Hyundai i30** (2029).

TOP 10 BRANDS



1. TOYOTA 12,029



2. MAZDA 6926



3. KIA 6200



4. HYUNDAI 5732



5. FORD 5047

4X4 UTES



1. Ford Ranger
3152



2. Toyota Hilux
2817



3. Isuzu Ute D-Max
1345



4. Mazda BT-50
1053



5. Mitsubishi Triton
790



6. LDV T60/T60 Max
683



7. Toyota Landcruiser
639



8. Nissan Navara
636



9. GWM Ute
579



10. Ssangyong Musso
295

SUV SMALL <\$40K



1. MG ZS
1588



2. Mazda CX-30
1291



3. Kia Seltos
998



4. Mitsubishi ASX
767



5. GWM Haval Jolion
718



6. Volkswagen T-Roc
679



7. Mitsubishi Eclipse
Cross
656



8. Hyundai Kona
584



9. Chery Omoda 5
425



10. Toyota Corolla
Cross
413

TOP 10 BRANDS



6. MITSUBISHI 4440



7. TESLA 3676



8. MG 3463



9. NISSAN 3009



10. VOLKSWAGEN 2957

BATTERY ELECTRIC VEHICLE SALES FLOURISH IN APRIL

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) says battery electric vehicles accounted for 8% of new vehicle sales in April, well up from 1.1% of the market in April 2022.

"If you take all forms of electrification, that number has increased from 9.5% to 15.4%, and we know that this number would've been larger had the industry not faced global supply challenges," says FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber**.

"It's worth noting that five out of the top 10 models sold in April offer some form of electrification."

SHOWCASING HYDROGEN FUEL CELL TECHNOLOGY

Toyota Australia is taking a unique fleet of hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles on a road trip around the country to demonstrate the benefits of its zero-emission technology.

Among the fuel cell vehicles on show is the HiAce-based FCV Express Diner concept, a Caetano 33-seat commercial bus, a Toyota forklift, E0Dev stationary power generator, and the Toyota Mirai sedan.

Designed for use in situations from street stalls to disaster relief, the FCV Express Diner concept uses the same powertrain as the second-generation Mirai sedan, with two tanks capable of storing five kilograms of hydrogen for a driving range of approximately 400km.

The rear of the Toyota HiAce FCV Diner has been fitted out as a mobile kitchen, with five induction cooktops, an oven, rice cooker, fridge, freezer and three sinks with hot and cold water. All are powered by the onboard fuel cell.

The FCV Express Diner concept can use its fuel cell to provide electricity for other external power requirements, effectively as a mobile generator.

Toyota will also display a fuel cell bus that's currently available to market in Europe and Britain. The H2.City Gold bus was developed in partnership with Portuguese bus manufacturer CaetanoBus, and utilises the Toyota fuel cell technology as used in the Mirai.

The H2.City Gold bus stores 37.5kg of hydrogen in five tanks and has a



driving range of approximately 450km, with a combined power output of 180kW/2500Nm from the fuel cell stack and batteries.

A Toyota fuel cell forklift will also be on display demonstrating great potential for logistics and warehouse operators. It's a production vehicle available in Japan, and is being trialled in Toyota Australia's parts warehouses in Melbourne and Sydney.

The Toyota Hydrogen Showcase will also demonstrate other potential applications for hydrogen, with a stationary fuel cell power generator.

The generator is manufactured by E0Dev in France using Toyota fuel cells and sold in Australia through Blue Diamond.

Last year, one was used to power the Marvel Stadium sign and a coach's box during an AFL match.

More recently, an E0Dev generator was used at the Melbourne Grand Prix to power six marquees in the tech hub over four days.

In addition to having the opportunity to view a range of Toyota fuel cell vehicles and technologies, guests have the opportunity for a short drive in the Toyota Mirai.

The Hydrogen Showcase began in Melbourne on April 26, and will make stops in Brisbane, Sydney (May 15-16), Canberra (May 23), Adelaide (June 1-2), and Perth (June 13-14).

ELECTRIC, PHEV AND HYBRID SALES					APRIL 2023			
Total Market	Month		YTD		Variance +/- Vol. & %			
	2023	2022	2023	2022	MTH	YTD	MTH	YTD
ELECTRIC								
Passenger Private	2,002	350	10,479	5,458	1,652	5,021	472.0%	92.0%
SUV Private	4,515	512	13,409	2,147	4,003	11,262	781.8%	524.5%
Light Commercial Non-Private	13	4	38	13	9	25	225.0%	192.3%
Sub Total	6,530	866	23,926	7,618	5,664	16,308	654.0%	214.1%
HYBRID								
Passenger Private	1,328	2,086	5,425	9,085	-758	-3,660	-36.3%	-40.3%
SUV Private	4,264	4,100	16,268	17,686	164	-1,418	4.0%	-8.0%
Sub Total	5,592	6,186	21,693	26,771	-594	-5,078	-9.6%	-19.0%
PHEV								
Passenger Private	30	26	106	114	4	-8	15.4%	-7.0%
SUV Private	515	603	1,900	1,562	-88	338	-14.6%	21.6%
Sub Total	545	629	2,006	1,676	-84	330	-13.4%	19.7%
TOTAL	12,667	7,681	47,625	34,389	4,986	13,236	64.9%	38.5%