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A TALE OF TWO MARKETS

Hello there,

It's a tale of two countries with April's starkly contrasting new car market results. Australia saw its best April result yet, while New Zealand experienced a 10% drop compared to April 2023 and a 5% drop compared to April 2022.

Another telling sign of the slowdown in the new car market in New Zealand is the growth of stock on the ground, which is impacting distributor profitability. At the end of December 2023, according to recent figures from Deloitte, more than 90 days of supply was stored in bonded compounds and warehousing across the country.

But one interesting fact from the Deloitte report was that, in spite of being a smaller market, New Zealand's new car dealer finance penetration is greater than that of the Australian dealers, due apparently to better focus, process and management according to the international accounting and advisory firm.

The New Zealand government's efforts to curb inflation by discouraging consumer spending, coupled with the rising cost of living, have significantly impacted the new car market. Petrol prices, for instance, have soared to an average of \$3 a litre for 91 RON unleaded fuel.

The local new car industry is grappling with the aftermath of these market conditions. Some dealerships have already had to restructure and lay off staff. Last week, the Audi, Volkswagen,

and MG franchise dealerships in Hawkes Bay on New Zealand's east coast were forced to call in the liquidators.

However, one prominent new and used car dealer I spoke to at a local industry conference didn't seem concerned about the economic downturn in New Zealand, saying businesses would pivot and survive.

His exact words were: "Car dealers are like cockroaches; you can't kill them off. They will survive any crisis."

Another national used car dealer with 21 outlets across New Zealand said many buyers have capped their budget at \$10,000, making cars at this price point harder and harder to source as supply cannot keep up with demand.

He also noted that repossessions were up 34% year-on-year and that some heavy commercial customers had difficulty meeting their financial obligations because turnover was down.

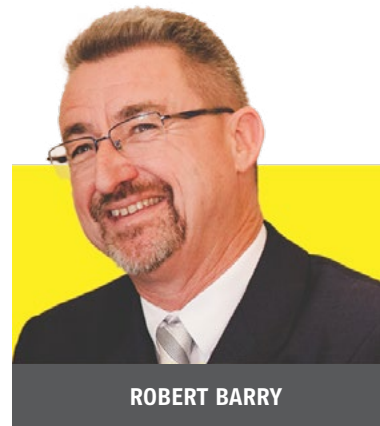
One of New Zealand's chief banking economists believes that inflation is slowly reducing to the magic 3% mark but doesn't believe that the official cash rate of 5.5% will be cut by the Reserve Bank (Central Bank) until later in 2024 and possibly not until early 2025.

It will be a long and hard winter for the New Zealand automotive industry in 2024.

Enjoy your reading this month.

Kindest regards,

Robert Barry
EDITOR **AUTOTALK**



LAWRENCE APPOINTED SUBARU AUSTRALIA'S GENERAL MANAGER

Inchcape Australia has promoted **Blair Read** to managing director of its distribution businesses, and **Scott Lawrence** has been promoted to general manager at Subaru Australia.

Reporting to Read, Lawrence will drive the strategic and operational advancement of Subaru Australia, guiding the brand into its next chapter.

He first joined Subaru Australia as a participant in the Graduate program, immersing himself in a comprehensive, multi-year rotational program that provided him with a strong understanding of all aspects of the brand's business operations.

In the decade since, Lawrence has built his career in the business's sales, operations, and retailer management areas, first taking on the role of business manager before progressing to NSW state manager and, subsequently, national sales and operations manager.

Since 2020, he has held the pivotal role of national sales manager at Subaru Australia, where he has been instrumental in driving growth and fostering enduring partnerships across the Subaru Retail Network.

The appointment of a new national sales manager will be shared in due course.

"I am honoured to join the esteemed leaders who have guided Subaru Australia, particularly at this exciting time for the brand.

"With the dedicated support of our valued partners across the Subaru Retail Network, for over half a century, Subaru has held a special place in the hearts and driveways of many Australian families.

"The strong partnerships we continue to forge across the Retail network are built on a shared purpose of delivering an exceptional experience for our customers and supporting even more Subaru owners as they embark on their



adventures throughout Australia.

"As we enter a new era following the celebration of Subaru Australia's 50th anniversary last year, I look forward to embracing the opportunities on the horizon while respecting the history that has built the brand we are today."

FORMER SCANIA AND NISSAN EXECUTIVES JOIN GM AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

General Motors has appointed **Heath Walker** as the new marketing director for GM Australia and New Zealand, effective April 23, 2024.

This follows the appointment of **Karla Leach** as the communications manager for GM Australia and New Zealand in February 2024 in a contract role.

Leach was the former director of corporate communications for Nissan Australia and previously held communications roles at Mazda and Fiat Chrysler Australia.

Walker brings a wealth of marketing and communications experience from Tesla, Nissan and, most recently, Scania in Australia.

"It is an exciting time at GM as we launch the Cadillac brand and expand the GMSV offering to include the new GMC Yukon Denali in 2025. We are delighted to welcome Heath to this new role in the team; his



experience and leadership will be vital to our success in the coming years," said GM Australia and New Zealand managing director Jess Bala.

Walker will lead the marketing for GM Specialty Vehicles and launch



the Cadillac brand, which will enter Australia and New Zealand later this year with a dedicated EV offering.

He will also lead the marketing effort for Isuzu Trucks New Zealand.

IAL RELEASES NEW TRANSPORT INDUSTRY RESEARCH

Isuзу Australia Limited (IAL) has released new independent industry research revealing evolving trends and challenges within Australia's road transport sector.

The Future of Trucking Report: The Way Forward is Australia's largest and most comprehensive survey, developed with external research specialists.

It highlights findings from more than 1300 survey respondents from transport operators, including prominent general freight and last-mile delivery fleets, through to construction, government, health, and other niche industry sectors.

IAL director **Andrew Harbison** explained that since the inaugural The Future of Trucking report was published in 2020, the road transport operating landscape has continued to evolve locally and globally.

"An essential goal of this year's report was to identify and monitor emerging and entrenched trends and to look at how operators navigate these within the Australian truck industry.

"The second instalment of the study uses this critical lens to delve into these issues—with the intent of better understanding overall industry sentiment, evolving technology systems, as well as procurement and maintenance requirements.

"Our industry is on the cusp of transformation, especially concerning technological and regulatory change," says Harbison.

"Our updated findings paint a confident picture of a strong and proactive sector ready to grapple with these challenges head-on."

The findings

With a positive response from industry participants, The Future of Trucking (2024) report includes the following key takeaways:

BUSINESS SENTIMENT

- The Australian truck industry is expected to evolve rapidly in the coming three years; with that growth comes tighter profit margins and rising fuel prices, which are at the top of Australian transport operators' business and truck fleet challenges.
- The national freight task continues to grow, although growth expectations are bullish based on previous



findings.

PROCUREMENT

- Across the Australian truck parc, the average tenure of new truck ownership remains at six years.
- Concurrently, the purchase preference for pre-built OEM vehicles as an alternative to custom-built trucks has increased for Australian businesses.
- The evaluation of the new truck's 'total cost of ownership' continues to be the primary purchase driver over initial upfront pricing, with this approach increasing since previous findings.

TECHNOLOGY AND SAFETY

- Data reveals that the market continues to be motivated by increasing safety standards and bolstering safety, the number one reason for adopting new truck technology.
- In the next five years, Lane Keep Assist (LKA), Blind Spot Monitoring (BSM) and Electronic Stability Control (ESC) are some of the vital safety technologies businesses are looking to adopt.
- Larger fleets and government operators are adopting active (autonomous) safety features more widely in new model trucks.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

- Australian fleets have indicated a strong appetite for adopting zero tailpipe emission vehicles, though the timescale for introduction remains mixed.
- Perceptions continue to improve surrounding the current suitability

of electric trucks and supporting charging infrastructure, with participants earmarking electric vehicles as a critical solution to Australia's transport future in the next 10–15 years.

TRUCK MAINTENANCE

- Industry awareness and action on Chain of Responsibility (CoR) compliance remains the same as previous findings, with three out of 10 operators unaware of CoR or without policies to comply.
- Businesses preferred to complete major truck repairs at OEM dealerships (including parts and componentry), citing quality, timeliness, service, and parts availability as critical factors.

John Walker, IAL project lead for The Future of Trucking report, said these fresh findings point to the innate resilience across the sector.

"Be it regulatory, societal or technological, a key theme emerging from the report is that change within our sector is as constant as it is ongoing.

"Overwhelmingly, our latest report shows significant positivity about the overall position of the road transport sector. We trust that this ongoing research project will arm and assist strategic thinking and decision-making within our industry."

For further information about the report, including a full report download, visit The Future of Trucking: The Way Forward at isuzu.com.au/news/future-of-trucking

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MANHEIM POWERS CHERY MOTOR'S DEALER-ONLY AUCTIONS

Cox Automotive Australia (CAA) subsidiary, Manheim, is partnering with Chery Motor Australia to power its ex-fleet demonstrator auctions.

From April 2024, Manheim will run its dealer-only closed internal auctions. These campaigns are the channel through which Chery's franchise dealers can bid on low-kilometre used vehicles from the distributor's fleet for their floor plan.

The first Chery Motor Australia and Manheim digital dealer-only auction saw more than 30 ex-company vehicles sold to the highest bidder within the franchise dealer network, each destined to be sold as low-mile used vehicles for budget-conscious buyers.

The Manheim auction saw 33 Chery dealers participate, with multiple dealers winning cars for their showroom floor. The clearance rate was 100%, meaning every ex-company vehicle on the block was snapped up.

"Cox Automotive Australia is pleased to work with Chery Motor on its remarketing strategy and delighted to see many of its franchise dealer partners participate in ex-company fleet vehicle auctions," said CAA chief executive **Stephen Lester**.

"In today's retail market, low kilometre used vehicles are an important piece in the puzzle for franchise car dealers, and the results suggest Chery's growing range of SUVs are ticking the right boxes. We saw the online auctions were watched by Chery Motor executives in Sydney and China, and the degree of interest in how the first run went was high."

The relationship with Chery Motor can grow beyond closed dealer auctions, added Cox Automotive Australia's head of OEM Heath Stubbs, stating the company's respective senior management teams were



now exploring new ways to broaden the collaboration between the two organisations.

"Cox Automotive Australia is eager to explore additional services we can offer to support Chery Motor's impressive volume aspirations in Australia," says Stubbs. "This presents us with an exciting opportunity to strengthen our partnership further and drive even greater success together."

As well as Manheim wholesale auctions, Cox Automotive Australia offers a range of retail services to carmakers and dealers, including its newly developed AI-enabled lead management system, Lead Driver, and fixed operations customer experience platform Xtime, which counts several of Australia's automotive OEMs as clients.

"We're delighted to be partnering with Manheim, which is a proven leader in the digital auction space, and the results are testimony to the fact that the growing range of Chery models in Australia is meeting the needs of consumers. We look forward to working closely with the Manheim team and our dealers to continue this positive momentum", says Chery Motor managing director **Lucas Harris**.

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PENSKE ACQUIRES THREE MELBOURNE DEALERSHIPS

Penske Automotive Group intends to expand its retail automotive operations into Australia by acquiring two Porsche dealerships and a Ducati motorcycle dealership in Melbourne, Australia.

The company has agreed to acquire Porsche Centre Brighton, Porsche Centre Doncaster and Ducati Melbourne West, with the deal expected to close in the second quarter of 2024, subject to conditions.

The Brighton dealership, located approximately 20 minutes from central Melbourne, opened in March 2009 and

has served the Porsche community in Melbourne for nearly 15 years. The Doncaster dealership is the newest official Porsche Centre in the high-growth northeast Melbourne suburbs.

"We are delighted to announce this transaction and expand our partnership with the Porsche brand. We have strategically built a diverse commercial vehicle and power systems business across Australia and New Zealand for over ten years based on our commitment to solid customer service," Penske Automotive Group head of international operations **Randall Seymore** says.

"With this acquisition, we will leverage that existing infrastructure and our significant experience in the retail automotive industry to drive the growth of the Porsche brand in Melbourne by building a relationship with Porsche enthusiasts that focuses on the customer experience."

According to Go Auto, these three dealerships are the last to be divested by the Auswild Family-owned Preston Motor Group, which has been selling off its automotive retail businesses over the past few years.

BROCKHOFF APPOINTED GM MINI AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

The BMW Group has appointed **Alexander Brockhoff** as the new general manager for Mini Australia and New Zealand, effective May 2024.

He replaces Matt Schmidt, who will move into Australia's BMW sales general manager role.

Brockhoff brings 18 years of experience within the BMW Group to his new role.

Starting his career with the company in 2006, he initially focused on sales volume planning in the German market.

He relocated to Australia in 2007, where he worked for BMW Financial Services, gaining insights into the company's captive finance arm.

Subsequently, he held various roles in marketing, including product and pricing manager. In this position, he spearheaded long-range planning, managed product specifications, and ensured competitive pricing positioning for every model sold in Australia.

Advancing through the company, Brockhoff was responsible for selling BMW M and BMW i. He then served as national sales manager



and head of network strategy and development.

Each position required him to work closely with the BMW Group dealer network nationwide to manage wholesale and retail sales and develop sustainable market strategies, culminating in his promotion to Mini Australia and New Zealand general manager.

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NISSAN'S EMILY FADAYEV VOTED PR PERSON OF THE YEAR

Since the demise of the Australian International Motor Show a decade ago, there have been few opportunities for the entire automotive industry to get together.

More than 150 attended the inaugural Newspress Australia Awards at the Intercontinental Hotel in Sydney on April 19, celebrating automotive journalism, photography, videography, and public relations.

The PR Awards were voted for by journalists and won on a simple "most votes wins" basis.

Nissan Australia's **Emily Fadayev** won the PR Person of the Year award. The other finalists were Hyundai's **Bill Thomas** and Isuzu Ute's **Mark Harman**.

Hyundai Australia won the PR Team of the Year award sponsored by DEC PR. The other finalists were Kia Australia and Porsche Australia.

Porsche Cars Australia (**Alexis Truscott**) won the PR Innovation of the Year award.

"Porsche was recognised by the motoring media for its flexible access to vehicles before their official launch dates, as well as meeting modern media needs with the might of a marketing budget, evidenced by its star-studded outback tour in an



all-electric Porsche Taycan," said the judges.

The Nissan Patrol Warrior event in Tasmania was judged the Product Launch of the Year. The other finalist events were the Porsche 911 GT3 event at The Bend, South Australia and the Kia EV6 function in Melbourne.

Ford Australia's **Cameron Kirby** won the Rising Star of PR award sponsored by



MSR. The other finalists were Hyundai Australia's **Nikki Jones** and Audi Australia's **Roxanne Salzborn**.

The 2023 Hyundai Australia N Festival won the Event of the Year award.

NEWSPRESS 2023 JOURNALISM AWARDS

People from all parts of the industry nominated the awards for journalism, photography, videography, and content. Then, the judges, **Phil Scott**,

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Anna Burgdorf, Peter McKay, and Lenore Fletcher, pored over them.

Toby Hagon from EV Central won the EV Journalist of the Year award, which Polestar Australia sponsored. Other category finalists were **Tom White** from CarsGuide and **Bryce Gatton** from The Driven.

"**Toby Hagon** has done the hard yards on EV tech. The research is deep, the opinions reasonably held, and as an educator, he is without peer," said the judges.

Feann Torr from **Carsales.com.au** won the Video of the Year award.

"Feann easily hits all the key points in his appraisal of the GWM Tank 300, wrapping it up with a good and concise summary. He gets the chequered flag in this tight contest," said the judges.

Sam Purcell from **Drive.com.au** won the Off-road Writer of the Year award sponsored by Bridgestone Dueler. Other category finalists were **Evan Spence** from Unsealed 4X4 and **Marcus Craft** from **carsguide.com.au**.

"Never a once-over-lightly reviewer, Sam puts in the work, has an objective testing methodology and quietly nails the facts and figures," said the judges.

Watts Under The Bonnet by **Carsales.com.au** won the Best Podcast award.

The judges said it's always interesting, easily digestible content on a hot topic.

Alex Misoyannis from **Drive.com.au** won the Rising Star Journalist award sponsored by Hyundai Australia and presented by Newspress Australia charity partner Drive against Depression.

The judges said Misoyannis is a data-driven, research-heavy sleuth with many big stories. A young phenomenon we will see more of in the future."

Misoyannis also won the award for the Scoop of the Year.

"Tesla was forced to take action after Alex exposed the lack of vital child safety equipment in the latest Model 3 – one of the country's best-selling vehicles," said the judges.

Drive's Ultimate Family Guide won the Print Special Edition of the Year.

"One of three generous lift-outs from Drive included a range of excellent topics. Rob Margeit's excellent confession on resetting his driving test was a highlight," said the judges.

Stephen Corby from The Weekend Australian won the Columnist of the Year award.

"The true test of a motoring column is to have non-car people read it and enjoy it, and with this bloke, they do," said the judges.

Byron Mathioudakis from **CarsGuide.com.au** won the award for Best Road Tester.

"With a knowledge of the minutiae of the car world that is second to none, Byron has a flying start over most of his contemporaries," said the judges

Thomas Wielecki was awarded Photographer of the Year.

"Like a good bottle of Red, Thomas only gets better with age," said the judges.

Wheels Car of the Year 2023 by **Whichcar.com.au** won the online Special Edition of the Year award.

"Not every car of the year award is undertaken with the high standards of the original, and Wheels is still setting the benchmark. This historically respected car of the year cannot be ignored," the judges said.

Alex Inwood from Wheels was voted the Feature Writer of the Year.

"Factual and fascinating, Alex's pieces are beautifully visual and transporting," said the judges.

Joshua Dowling won the News Journalist of the Year award, which Nissan sponsored.

"Dowling is unafraid – a constantly high-achieving journalist who is an elbows-out news gatherer through and through," the judges said.

Peter Robinson won the Feature of the Year award for his Star Crossed piece.

"Only one person could have written this story of failure and redemption from the inside of one of the most hallowed brands in the world. Of course, Peter paid for it with the coldest of shoulders from Stuttgart for years," the judges said.

Paint and Panel won the award for Custom Publication of the Year.

"A well-executed offering that balances news, features, interviews and imagery in a well-balanced package. It makes a traditionally dry industry interesting," the judges said.

Car Expert's **Paul Maric** won Video Presenter of the Year. Other category finalists were **Alexandra Lawrence** from Carsales and **Tom Baker** from Chasing Cars.

"An engineer by training but a journalist by instinct, Paul is never reluctant to call out product inaccuracies and consumers since he is their ally, hence his huge following,"



the judges said.

Stephen Dwight won the award for Videographer of the Year.

"In the modern motoring media world, video is more important than ever before, and the judges commended Stephen for his excellent use of light and ability to capture the eye and strong editing skills," the judges said.

Bruce Newton won the Journalist of the Year award, sponsored by Kia Australia.

"A jack of all trades, Bruce is a vastly experienced operator equally at home breaking news or turning out the most readable long-form pieces, and he's been doing it for decades. He is not shy of doing the work fact-checking on double sourcing before he sits down to write," said the judges.

CarExpert was judged the Media outlet of the year, and the other finalists were CarsGuide, Drive, and CarSales.

"CarExpert has plenty of swagger, but the content is bang on, well-produced and edited. It feels free of PR spin and appears unafraid to call it as it sees it. It's impossible not to be impressed by a site that can deliver across all of today's media and consumer demands," the judges said.



NINTH WIN FOR HILDER IN ISUZU TEAM ELITE PROGRAM

Shining a headlight on excellence within its dealer network, Isuzu's Team Elite program has been running for more than 25 years.

Team Elite is an incentive, points-based competition format covering all aspects of customer care, from sales and service to product and parts knowledge.

The benefits of the Team Elite program are manifold, matching Isuzu's transport products with highly skilled truck specialists.

IAL Head of Aftersales, **Brett Stewart**, says the value of such programs is more critical than ever as technology and customer needs evolve.

"Isuzu has always relied on an experienced network of truck sales consultants and service technicians to support buyers and their businesses locally," said Stewart.

"The Team Elite program not only recognises the skill and effort behind this but works to cultivate a culture of excellence within our national network," he says.

TOP OF THE CROP

Capping off the 2023 Team Elite program was the national champion sales consultant competition, which assesses competitors across three fields of knowledge: product, brand, and truck model-specifics.

The three finalists for the year were

Josh Tuddenham of Westar Trucks (VIC), **Shane Hilder** of Webster Trucks (TAS), and **Richard Pineros** of Blacklocks Isuzu (VIC).

"Demonstrating excellence across all aspects of the competition and accumulating the highest points overall, Shane Hilder has once again been awarded the title of national champion sales consultant," says IAL Head of Sales **Craig White**.

"Shane continues to do Isuzu proud with his dedication to expanding his wealth of knowledge and sharpening his sales skills."

"Well done to all our finalists, especially to Shane, who secured his ninth win in Team Elite competition history."

"Competing against **Josh** and **Richard** was a lot of fun; they are two great guys honing their craft, and we need people like this to take the business into the future," said Hilder.

"I'd like to acknowledge Isuzu Australia's effort in making the Team Elite event a special occasion. Their consistent emphasis on keeping it fresh and challenging aligns with how seriously they take the rest of their business."

"It certainly keeps you on your toes and is a great opportunity to take a holistic approach to the sales process."

PART AND PARCEL

The 2023 Team Elite categories for service and parts also saw strong finishes in their respective areas.

In the service manager category, **Scott Sell** from Westar Truck Centre (VIC), **Jonnie Arnel** from Ballarat Isuzu (VIC) and **John Tsacos** from Wagga Motors (NSW) were recognised for exceptional performance in attaining service goals and initiatives.

In the parts manager category, the top scores were attained by **Ashley Ryan** from Patterson Cheney Trucks (VIC), **Stephen Twardochleb** from Canberra Isuzu (NSW), and **Ryan Macauley** from Midcoast Trucks (NSW), demonstrating outstanding knowledge and practice in the field of parts management.

Stewart said these categories were not to be overlooked, as Isuzu's commitment to speedy availability of genuine quality parts to the national dealer network remained a high priority.

"Strong aftersales support is all part of our commitment to serving Australian businesses and a vital part of ensuring Isuzu trucks remain on the road for these valued customers."

"My wholehearted congratulations to our service and parts winners whose dedication to the task makes the Isuzu dealer network and the brand shine," he says.

MIXED REACTIONS TO GOVERNMENT ACCEPTING CODE REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government's response to the Independent Review of the Franchising Code of Conduct, which has agreed, or agreed in principle, to all of Dr Schaper's 23 recommendations has received mixed reactions from stakeholders.

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries agreed (FCAI) with Dr Schaper's view that the Code is generally fit for purpose and that Part 5 relating to new vehicle dealerships is operating as intended and not producing any unintended consequences.

It also welcomed Dr Schaper's finding that the sector requires respite from constant review. The FCAI noted Dr Schaper's observation that no sector recommended that Part 5 be removed from the Code and that it now appeared to be part of the regulatory framework.

The FCAI also notes Dr Schaper's recommendation that service and repair work conducted by motor vehicle dealerships be captured in the Code.

The Australian Automotive Dealers Association (AADA) says its members will be disappointed and urges the Government to introduce stronger automotive-specific franchising regulations, which the Motor Trade Association of Australia also endorses.

"MTAA has been calling on the Government to address franchisor opportunism in the automotive retail sector for many years, and we are pleased their endorsement of Dr Schaper's recommendations will go some way to address the imbalance between automotive manufacturers and dealers," MTAA chief executive **Matt Hobbs** says.

"We continue to believe that an independent code is a necessary step, mainly to drive greater competitiveness, sustainability, and productivity in the sector as it undergoes the most significant transformation in its history with the advent of EVs," he says.

AADA chief executive **James Voortman** says the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard, which will take effect in less than eight months, will make dealers more vulnerable to manufacturers exiting the Australian market and leave them stranded.



MATT HOBBS

"Frankly, we need protections for dealers similar to those offered in the United States," 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.

"While we consider that the review could have gone further to protect automotive franchisees, we welcome the extension of some protections to truck dealers, although we maintain that truck dealers should enjoy all the protections under Part 5 of the Code.

"Furthermore, we support the consideration of a licencing regime for franchisors which could allow for better dispute resolution and the assurance that the Code should explicitly capture service and repair work conducted by motor vehicle dealerships," Voortman says.

Hobbs says the MTAA applauds the Government for recognising that a fairer balance between franchisees and franchisors needs to be struck. Including other classes of automotive retailers beyond car dealers, such as motorcycle, truck, farm, and industrial machinery dealers, is also welcome, given these businesses were previously not covered in the same way under the franchising code.



JAMES VOORTMAN

It also welcomes the government to clarify that service and repair work performed by motor vehicle dealerships is within the scope of the code.

However, it says there is still further work to be done with Australia's shift to EVs; vehicle sales channels are evolving with new business models emerging. Manufacturers and distributors are entering the EV retail business for the first time, resulting in financial impacts on dealers and creating a power imbalance between both parties.

Automotive dealers, who make significant ongoing investments in facilities, staff and equipment while generating goodwill, must be protected from misconduct and opportunistic behaviour. The franchising code must safeguard franchisees, predominately small to medium businesses, from such conduct.

Given this unique circumstance facing automotive franchisees and franchisors, along with the industry's sizeable capital and technology requirements, MTAA strongly recommends a standalone code of conduct for the automotive retail sector.

MTAA also recommends that the proposed licensing regime examine and implement best practices to find a just transition for automotive dealers. The MTAA looks forward to working closely with the Treasury Taskforce on this initiative.



USED CAR PRICES STABILISE, TREND BACK UPWARDS IN 2024

Dealer-used vehicle selling prices have stopped coming down in 2024, trending slightly upwards again, according to Cox Automotive Australia (CAA) retail data.

The CAA dealer delisted used car price Index ended March 2024 at 136.5, up from 134.2 at the beginning of the year.

An Index figure of 136.5 denotes an average dealer used-vehicle price increase of 36.5% since the base 100-point period, December 2019. The index is adjusted by list price and volume-weighted, with price changes including inflation.

This quarterly trend marks a change from 2023, which saw 11 consecutive monthly price index declines as the used market cooled following dramatically elevated prices during the COVID period, where shortages were a core issue.

The CAA dealer delisted used car price index peaked at 148.1 in August 2022, meaning prices on average across all segments and age groups have fallen 7.8% between then and now.

The pricing trend across 2024 is unsurprising when looking at the market demand and supply changes. Used car transactions in dealers across Q1 of 2024 are up a healthy 10.8% year-over-year (YoY), but at the same



time, dealer active listings (inventory) are down 6.2% since late 2023.

Market days' supply of all used vehicles hit 68 days at the end of 2023 and has since declined to 63 days, which would be expected given demand is outpacing supply in the CAA data.

However, pricing trends must be uniform, with substantial differences based on vehicle type and age. In brief, traditional passenger sedans and hatchbacks are more inflated than SUVs, and older vehicles are holding onto elevated values for longer than newer vehicles.

At 146.9 overall, passenger cars are, on

average, selling for 46.9% more than before COVID.

Prices are kept elevated by demand outpacing supply, with dwindling sales of traditional passenger cars in the new market (50% market share a decade ago, under 20% today) yielding shortages down the line.

By contrast, the SUV Index is up 28.2%, Pickups are up 35.8%, and BEVs & PHEVs are up 16.7%. Much has been made of EV resale value, but the small sample size (0.3% of the used market in the data is an EV or PHEV) means there's significant month-over-month volatility for the time being.

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Another trend is that older cars maintain more inflated prices, likely primarily driven by increased demand for cheaper vehicles due to elevated household spending pressures.

MANHEIM WHOLESALE AUCTIONS

Cox Automotive owns Manheim, a national wholesale auction house facilitating remarketing ex-fleet and traded-in used vehicles.

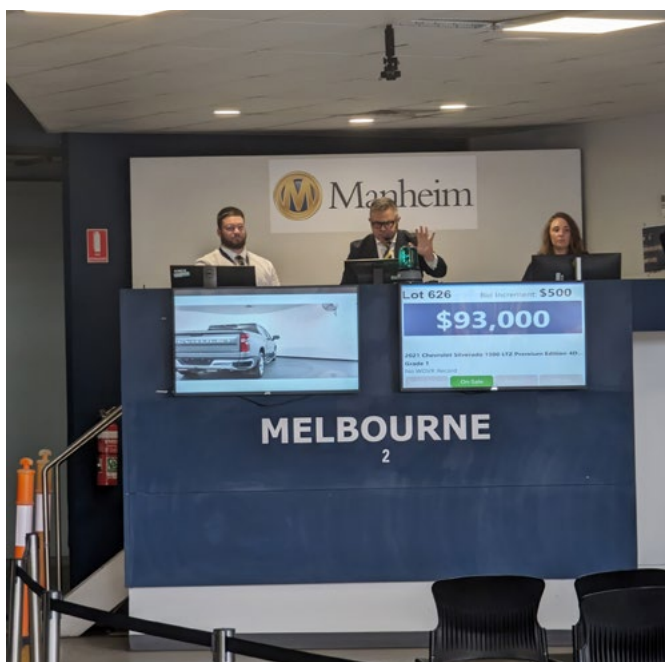
Vehicles sold through the national wholesale auctions came from a few sources, with the most significant share coming from fleet companies, OEMs, dealers, and the private sector. Government, corporate, and financier fleets sell vehicles through Manheim's weekly auctions.

Overall auction sales were up a healthy 29.8% during Q1 YoY, though sales are still below COVID-era levels.

The overall Manheim Price Index of 138.9 is down 6.3% YoY but has been stable for seven months now, meaning vendors should have confidence that today's sales prices are about where the market sits.

The Index is also down 17.1% from its mid-2022 peak when the wholesale market was highly inflated.

As witnessed in the dealer-used retail market, there's a correlation between older vehicles and higher Price Indexes. For example, eight- to 10-year-old passenger cars are up 77.1% over December 2019.



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RPM UNDERTAKES \$4M CAPITAL RAISING

RPM Automotive Group Limited has received \$4 million in commitments from investors via a two-tranche share placement at an issue price of \$0.072.

Funds will be used to develop its strategic tyre recycling program and improve RPM's capital structure by strengthening its balance sheet by partially repaying a Collins Street Value Fund convertible note issued as part of its 2021 acquisition strategy.

"RPM has made significant progress in its acquisition strategy since 2021, expanding our national footprint and growing the company to where it is today, which was made possible due to the continued support of investors and funding received from Collins Street Value Fund," says RPM Automotive chief executive **Guy Nicholls**.

"RPM is now entering its next phase of growth. With the benefit of scale, The RPM team is now focused on driving margin expansion across our network. The capital raising strengthens our balance sheet and allows us to develop our tyre recycling initiative. It also builds our institutional shareholder profile."

"RPM is ideally placed to take advantage of the regulatory tailwinds supporting tyre recycling. Each year, 56 million tyres are scrapped in Australia, with only a small proportion recycled.

We will access our existing distribution network and customer base to create recycled rubber-based products for use in multiple sectors, which could ultimately see us collecting and annually recycling 54,000 tonnes of scrap tyres within five years," he says.

DETAILS OF THE PLACEMENT

Under the placement, RPM will issue approximately 55.7 million new shares to placement participants for \$0.072 per new share to raise \$4.0 million (before costs). The placement issue price represents a 15.3% discount to the last closing price of \$0.085.

RPM will also issue one new option for every new share issued to placement participants. RPM will apply to the ASX to quote the new options.

The new options will have an exercise price of \$0.10 and expire on August 31, 2025. The new options will be offered only to placement participants under a prospectus to be lodged. The terms of the latest options will be outlined in the prospectus.

The placement will be undertaken in two tranches. Under the first tranche, 48.5 million new shares will be issued on or around April 24, 2024. This will utilise RPM's existing capacity under ASX Listing Rules 7.1 and 7.1A.

Under the second tranche, a further 7.2 million new shares will be issued and



55.7 million new options (i.e., the free attaching options in connection with both placement tranches).

The issue of new shares and new options under the second tranche of the placement will be subject to shareholder approval, sought to be obtained at a general meeting of shareholders in late May 2024.

The second tranche of new shares and all the new options are expected to be issued on or around May 31, 2024. RPM is applying to have the new options quoted on ASX at the time of their issue.

SHAPE THE FUTURE OF AUTOMATED VEHICLES IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Government is seeking the public's help to shape the future rules for automated vehicles in Australia.

Automated vehicle technology is advancing rapidly, and the government must make the most of this technology safely.

That's why the government is working to develop a new law – the Automated Vehicle Safety Law – to manage the safe operation of automated vehicles on public roads.

As part of this consultation, the government is considering how the law

should keep modifications, repairs, and remote operation of automated vehicles safe and how to ensure consumers get the information they need about automated cars.

The consultation also explores changes to state and territory laws, including whether there must be new road rules for people using automated vehicles.

This technology will impact everyone who uses the roads, not just those using automated vehicles, so the Government encourages all road users, industry and other stakeholders to look at the consultation paper and have their say.

Public feedback ensures it strikes the right balance with this new law.

This builds on consultation undertaken by the National Transport Commission, which leads this work alongside the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

This latest consultation round seeks feedback on new areas of the proposed law and closes on June 11, 2024.

For more information and to have a say, visit <https://www.ntc.gov.au/AV-safety-reform>.

CHINA ACCOUNTS FOR 25% OF PORSCHE'S GLOBAL SALES VOLUME

The importance of Auto China 2024 was not lost on the Porsche brand which saw the premiere of a special China version of the new-generation Taycan and the local debut of the new all-electric Macan.

Since entering the market in 2001, sales in China now account for 25% of the brand's global volume. In the 2023 financial year, more than 79,283 were delivered to customers in China.

With the sales regions of North America, Europe, and the overseas and growth markets, China is one of the reasons Porsche has a very balanced and stable sales structure worldwide.

Porsche executive board chairman **Oliver Blume** sees further potential.

"Electromobility is developing rapidly in China. With our Chinese version of the new Taycan and our first all-electric Macan, we are pushing forward here at the right time. I am sure that we will inspire our customers again and expand our position in the luxury BEV vehicle segment," Blume says.



Porsche's Chinese version of the new Taycan offers a highly attractive entry-level model with market-specific infotainment and connectivity features. Digital solutions developed via the local ecosystem are also among the highlights of the all-electric Macan.

Both examples show that Porsche is addressing the individual wishes and needs of the Chinese market in a very targeted manner – and with the

involvement of its R&D organisation in Shanghai, where German and Chinese developers are working side by side on the future of Porsche in mixed teams.

Porsche and Audi will also offer an exclusive charging network for China customers of both brands in the future. The partnership aims to provide BEV customers with a dedicated, convenient charging experience with as many service points as possible.

LAMBORGHINI URUS PHEV DEBUT IN BEIJING

More than 12 years after the concept Lamborghini Urus was unveiled at Auto China Beijing, the latest iteration, the SE plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) was unveiled at the Volkswagen Group media night on April 24

The Urus SE PHEV features a new aerodynamic design, new onboard technologies, and a hybrid powertrain with an output of 580kW (789hp).

"Twelve years ago in Beijing, I was proud to present the Urus concept car to the world, which created a whole new segment of a super sports car in the body of an SUV," Automobili Lamborghini chairperson and chief executive **Stephan Winkelmann** says.

"Since its launch, the Urus has become one of the most successful Lamborghini models, becoming our third pillar. As the most powerful SUV on the market, the new Urus SE is the next chapter of our story, which also marks another step in our electrification plan Direzione Cor Tauri."

The Lamborghini Urus SE adopts a re-engineered twin-turbo 4.0 V8 engine,

delivering 456kW of power and 800 Nm of torque. In optimal synergy with the electric powertrain, the system generates a total power output of 580kW and a total torque of 950 Nm.

A new centrally-located longitudinal electric torque vectoring system is also installed for the first time in the Urus SE, complementing the transfer case and the latest electronic limited-slip differential to give the vehicle "on demand" oversteering to deliver Lamborghini's driving experience.

By combining thermal and electric power, the Urus SE boasts best-in-segment torque and power values with an 80% reduction in emissions.

Combining driving modes and four new Electric Performance Strategies (EPS), it offers eleven options and can travel more than 60km in EV Drive mode.

New design features include headlight clusters with matrix LED technology, a bumper, and a front grill.

The hood adopts a floating design, in line with the design concept of the Revuelto, and the cargo compartment hatch features a Gallardo-inspired



design style with the taillight clusters connected with the "Y" lights and the new rear diffuser.

The "Feel Like a Pilot" design concept inside the cabin features a 12.3-inch central touchscreen with the new Human Machine Interface (HMI), allowing enhanced interaction between the driver and the digital system.

The Urus SE also offers diverse Ad Personam customisation options, with more than 100 bodywork colour options, 47 colour combinations and four types of embroidery for the interior.

MANHEIM AUCTIONING SHITBOX RALLY CARS FOR CANCER COUNCIL

Manheim Australia is the auction partner for the 'Shitbox Rally', with an array of adventure mobiles to be sold online between May 3-6.

It challenges participants to drive their chariots, costing \$1500 or less, across some of Australia's most gruelling routes in the name of charity.

The Shitbox Rally 2024 – Autumn event was held between April 12 and 20 and took participants from Adelaide to Perth via a revised 4976km route.

This iteration was unlike any other, with weather necessitating a series of chaotic last-minute changes, adding an 1176km total detour passing through remote towns, including Coober Pedy, Penong, and Caiguna.

A convoy of 260 teams participated in the 2024 Autumn rally, raising \$2.9 million for the independent charity, Cancer Council. Box Rallies (Shitbox Rally and Mystery Box Rally) are the leading individual fundraisers for Cancer Council nationally, generating more than \$45 million for cancer research.

Among the participants was the United States Ambassador to Australia, Caroline Kennedy. Ambassador Kennedy and consulate colleagues formed 'Team Moonshot' and took their old Ford Falcon from go-to- whoa, raising \$340,000 in the process.

Every Shitbox Rally features an array of roadworthy and registered cars decorated for the occasion, and this year was no exception.

Popular choices included Aussie-made Toyota Camrys and Avalons, Ford Falcons and Holden Commodores. However, some left-of-centre models included a Nissan 300ZX, a 1979 Mercedes-Benz 300D, a Volvo 740 wagon, and convertible VW Beetle and Peugeot 206 versions.

A selection of the vehicles that made it to the Perth finish line will be sold off unregistered via a Manheim Online BidNow auction, with all funds raised again going towards Cancer Council.

Ambassador Kennedy's team elected to keep their vehicle so it would not be among those up for auction.



"We're proud to support Shitbox Rally as an auction partner," said Manheim Australia Director of Operations **Sean Kinsey**. "It's an incredible, community-led event that gives life-long memories to participants and raises millions for a cause that touches every one of us."

The next Shitbox Rally is the Winter 2024 event, slated to take participants on a circuitous route from Melbourne to Alice Springs. Manheim will auction many of the competitor vehicles again via the live auction process.



RAM TRUCKS AUSTRALIA CELEBRATES 30,000 UNITS WITH FINANCE OFFER

Ram Trucks Australia has remanufactured its 30,000th vehicle at its Melbourne Manufacturing Facility – a Ram 1500 Big Horn.

The Billet Silver Crew Cab with 6'4" cargo tub marks a significant milestone in the Ram Trucks Australia journey, which began in 2014 with the Ram 2500 HD rolling off the production line.

Since then, the brand has grown to offer Australia's largest and most comprehensive range of full-size pick-up trucks.

To celebrate the 30,000th full-size pick-up truck and in preparation for the end of the financial year, Ram Trucks Australia has a new finance deal.

'Mates Rates' is a no-deposit 4.99% finance offer for Ram 1500 Big Horn models sold and delivered between May 1 and June 30, 2024.

"30,000 vehicles is a significant car park in anyone's books – that it came about in a segment that didn't exist a few years ago is a testament to the hard work of everyone involved," said Ram Trucks Australia general manager **Jeff Barber**.

"From our partners in the US and Melbourne to our dedicated dealer network in Australia and New Zealand, the Ram Trucks business proves that it's possible to establish an OEM-level automotive manufacturing capability in Australia despite the closure of local automotive brands.

"The lead up to the end of the financial year is always peak buying time for



small to medium business owners, and this 'Mates Rates' finance offer is a compelling deal on the entry point to the Ram Trucks range."

The Ateco Group is the world's only Ram-authorized manufacturer of right-hand drive Ram trucks. The relationship with Ram Trucks in the USA began in late 2013.

All Ram Trucks Australia vehicles are international-spec vehicles – delivered straight from the global Ram Trucks production line in the US – uniquely coded for the Australian and New Zealand markets and the local build process at the Melbourne Manufacturing Facility.

Ram Trucks Australia is the biggest

full-size pick-up truck manufacturer in Australia. With a significant parts warehouse and inventory and 73 dealers throughout Australia and New Zealand, this fast-growing vehicle segment has substantial local supply chain benefits.

It employs 400 people and has two dedicated production lines in Clayton, Victoria, which can produce 50 full-size pickup trucks daily. The RAM Trucks Australia range starts with the 1500 Big Horn, 1500 Laramie, 1500 Laramie Sport, 1500 Limited, 2500 and 3500 Laramie Heavy Duty, and the 1500 TRX Final Edition.



EXPO ATTRACTS MORE THAN 13,000 VISITORS

The Australian Auto Aftermarket and Collision Repair Expo attracted record-breaking trade visitors.

Across three days at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, 13,282 visitors participated in the combined Expo.

"The vibe was electric in the packed halls, and feedback from visitors has been off the charts. The number and quality of exhibitors were amazing, as was the popularity of our expanded training programs and features," said Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) chief executive **Stuart Charity**.

The Expo was officially opened on April 11 by **Dr Andrew Leigh MP**, joined by Charity; **Wayne Bryant** – AAAA Board Chairman; **Bill Hanvey** – CEO of Auto Care Association (USA); and **Gino Ricciuti** – APMEC Chairman.

With more than 400 exhibitors representing the entire automotive aftermarket supply chain, attendees were treated to a showcase of the latest tools, technology, parts, and services.

Exhibitors presented their offerings through captivating stands while engaging with trade visitors, fostering



networking opportunities, and cultivating business relationships.

"The tradeshow floor encompassed renowned brands, sought-after training, and career and business advancement avenues. This is a fundamental role of the AAAA, and we are very proud of our contribution to fostering industry growth through this event. The Expo has exceeded expectations across all key measurables,

and the feedback we have received has been positive," said Charity.

The Expo Electrified Zone and ADAS Technology Zones proved valuable additions. With all scheduled training sessions for each zone fully booked ahead of the event, it demonstrated the industry's hunger for these emerging areas of the automotive aftermarket.

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Melissa Horne MP, Victorian Minister For Roads And Road Safety, officially opened the Expo Electrified Zone on the first day of the Expo.

Training was a central feature of the 2024 Expo, delivering world-class, comprehensive training sessions covering advanced diagnostics, EV training, business management, collision repair and more.

In an Australian first, an in-depth Technical Training Program led by international diagnostics experts **Danny Versluis** from the Diagnose Dan YouTube channel and **Sean Tipping** from the Automotive Diagnostic Podcast gave automotive technicians a unique opportunity to remain at the forefront of vehicle diagnosis across key themed sessions.

The Business Education Program covered the most important automotive business topics, led by many of Australia's leading aftermarket voices, respected subject matter experts, and Auto Care Association USA president and chief executive **Bill Hanvey**. Subjects covered the latest aftermarket trends, how to address the industry skills shortage, marketing, and sessions were filled.

The international flavour of the Expo continued with an exclusive Collision Repair Training Program. U.S.-based EV expert Dirk Fuchs, CEO of Electric Mobility Consulting, held multiple sessions covering EV service, repair and workshop fundamentals.

U.K.-based business coach Robert Snook hosted business improvement sessions. At the same time, Bud Center, Director of Technical Products



and Curriculum at I-CAR USA, tackled advanced collision repair techniques and strategies.

The networking event held on the show floor on Friday afternoon allowed visitors and exhibitors to connect with peers.

The Flying Spanners competition was introduced to the Expo to encourage and promote the next generation of automotive technicians. The competition involved teams of automotive students from different Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) competing against each other to rebuild an engine faster than the opposing team, using only hand tools. The competition was a massive success for everyone involved.

The best and brightest of the automotive aftermarket industry were celebrated and formally recognised at the Auto Aftermarket Innovation Awards breakfast and the Australian Auto Aftermarket Excellence Awards Banquet.

"I want to thank all of our exhibitors, our speakers who came from across the globe and around Australia, and the record number of visitors taking time out of their businesses to attend



– the passion and dedication shown by everyone has been brilliant," said Charity.

"I'd like to express my gratitude for the support of Auto Aftermarket Expo Major Sponsor Repco, Collision Repair Expo Major Sponsor SAPE Group, and our valued partners and sponsors who helped us deliver this industry event.

"I'd also like to thank the AAAA Board, the AAAA team, and the MSE events team for their work in bringing this event to life. We are now looking forward to Autocare in Brisbane in 2025."

The following Australian Auto Aftermarket and Collision Repair Expo will occur in 2026.





EXCELLENCE AWARDS CELEBRATE AUTOMOTIVE AFTERMARKET

The industry's best and brightest were celebrated and formally recognised during two awards events at the Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo.

The Australian Auto Aftermarket Excellence Awards Banquet, presented by Burson Auto Parts, took place on April 11 in the Melbourne Room at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre.

Nearly 700 guests celebrated and recognised excellence in the automotive aftermarket industry across various award categories.

This year, three new awards were introduced: the Automotive Sustainability Business Award, the Automotive Education Excellence Award, and the Women at The Wheel Award.

The evening also marked the opportunity to honour several individuals: **Anthony Kittel** from REDARC Electronics received the Outstanding Service to Industry award, **Lex Gelmi** from Pedders Suspension & Brakes was awarded the Kim Auger Young Achiever Award, while **Margaret Dymond** – Penrite Oil Company, and **Jeff Smit** – The Automotive Technician,



became worthy inductees into the AAAA Hall of Fame.

The evening was hosted by sports personality **Russell Robertson** and TV presenter **Neroli Meadows**, with a soundtrack provided by DJ **Emma Peters**.

"The awards dinner was an extraordinary night that reinforced my admiration for this industry. The vibe was electric, and we were able to celebrate and reward those achieving great things. Congratulations to all

our award winners at the Gala and the Innovation Awards Breakfast. It is inspirational for all of us," said Australian Auto Aftermarket Association chief executive **Stuart Charity**.

The Auto Aftermarket Innovation Awards breakfast, sponsored by Ryco, was held before the opening of the Expo. Nearly 300 guests were treated to an inspirational morning where the companies producing the industry's most innovative products, services, and campaigns were recognised.

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The 2024 Australian Auto Aftermarket Excellence Awards' Honour Roll follows:

EXCELLENCE AWARDS

KIM AUNGER YOUNG ACHIEVER

Lex Gelmi, Pedders Suspension & Brakes

OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO INDUSTRY

Anthony Kittel, REDARC Electronics

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Margaret Dymond, Penrite Oil Company

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Jeff Smit, The Automotive Technician

TERRY MAHONEY EXCELLENCE IN MARKETING

Nulon Products Australia

EXCELLENCE IN MANUFACTURING

FMP Group

EXCELLENCE IN EXPORT

REDARC Electronics

EXCELLENCE IN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT & WELLBEING AWARD

Repco Authorised Service

Automotive Education Excellence Award [NEW]

Clinton Brett – Diesel Help Australia

WOMEN AT THE WHEEL [NEW]

Priscilla Robb

EXCELLENCE IN REPAIR & SERVICE – CHAIN

Maryborough Service Centre (Repco Authorised Service)

Daryn, Petrina and Dana Brims

EXCELLENCE IN REPAIR & SERVICE – INDEPENDENT WORKSHOP

Radical Automotive, Cody McKay

2024 AUSTRALIAN AUTO AFTERMARKET INNOVATION AWARDS

MOST INNOVATIVE NEW AFTERMARKET PRODUCT (4WD)

Zeder Corporation – Upgraded Front Steering Knuckle Kit

MOST INNOVATIVE NEW AFTERMARKET PRODUCT (ACCESSORIES)

Brown & Watson International – IDC25X DC to DC Charger

MOST INNOVATIVE NEW AFTERMARKET PRODUCT (ELECTRICAL)

REDARC Electronics – TVMS Rogue

MOST INNOVATIVE NEW AFTERMARKET PRODUCT (PARTS)

FMP Group – General CT Rotors

MOST INNOVATIVE NEW AFTERMARKET PRODUCT (PERFORMANCE)

Garrett Advanced Motion – Garrett G-Smart Module

MOST INNOVATIVE NEW AFTERMARKET PRODUCT (TOOLS & EQUIPMENT)

CoolDrive Auto Parts –



Powerduction 37LG

MOST INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY IMPACT PROGRAM

mycar Tyre and Auto

MOST INNOVATIVE MARKETING CAMPAIGN

mycar Tyre and Auto

MOST INNOVATIVE E-COMMERCE SOLUTION

Zeder Corporation

AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY

AWARD [NEW]

REDARC Electronics

2024 AUSTRALIAN AUTO AFTERMARKET EXPO STAND AWARDS

Best Stand 36 sq Metres or Under
Megabus

Best Stand Over 36 sq Metres
Brembo

MAZDA REVEALS TWO ELECTRIC VEHICLES AT AUTO CHINA

The Mazda EZ-6 unveiled at Auto China 2024 (April 25 to May 5) is the first of a series of new electrified vehicles (new energy vehicles) developed and manufactured by Changan Mazda, expected to be launched in China by the end of 2024.

A Mazda Arata crossover SUV concept unveiled simultaneously is scheduled as the second new electrified vehicle to be introduced in the Chinese market by the end of 2025.

In China, where electrification is rapidly advancing, Mazda will expand its line-up of electrified products so that more customers can choose them.

"Going forward, Mazda will continue to work with Changan Automobile to turn Mazda's China business around by introducing its unique products that meet the needs of Chinese customers who prefer advanced vehicles," says Mazda president and chief executive Masahiro Moro.

The Mazda EZ-6 will be available as a battery electric vehicle (BEV) and a plug-in hybrid electrified vehicle (PHEV).

According to the brand, customers



in China will be able to select a powertrain that matches their lifestyle and preferences.

The EZ-6 features 50:50 weight distribution between the front and rear (BEV model), front strut and rear multi-link suspensions, and an electric-powered rear spoiler that improves high-speed stability.

Other innovative features that improve safety and convenience include an intelligent drive system that supports the driver and accident mitigation

technology; intelligent parking technology allowing voice control, even when the driver is outside the vehicle; and innovative cabin technology.

The BEV model has an expected 600km range, while the PHEV model is expected to achieve more than 1000km on a single fuel tank.

The rear-wheel drive (RWD) EZ-6 can seat five, measures 4921mm by 1890mm by 1485mm and has 245/45R19-inch tyres.

GENESIS UNVEILS G80 EV MAGMA CONCEPT

Genesis unveils its G80 EV Magma concept at the Beijing International Automotive Exhibition (Auto China 2024), the show running until May 4.

It's a new addition to Genesis' recently launched high-performance Magma programme, now introduced to China, with the brand also showcasing its X Gran Berlinetta concept and GV60 Magma concept.

The Genesis Magma programme infuses the brand with a new dynamism. It marks the brand's exciting entry into high-performance cars, aiming to develop a high-performance Magma variant for each existing model in the line-up.

"The introduction of Genesis Magma to China signifies our expansion into a new frontier of the driving experience," says Genesis global design head SangYup Lee.

"G80 EV Magma concept is a stunning expression of both our design and engineering capabilities, as well as our commitment to meet the ever-evolving needs of Chinese consumers in pursuit of ultimate performance, represented by the beautiful and China-exclusive Acme Blue."

The front grille has been redesigned to give a more striking appearance, along with wider fenders and a new rear bumper, which includes an integrated fog light, while a sculpted boot door design and pronounced spoiler lip contribute to improved aerodynamics.

The wider body and lowered ride height are complemented by 21-inch wheels, which are wider at the rear.

An advanced suspension system, high-performance wheels, and large, ventilated front and rear brakes significantly enhance the vehicle's



capabilities.

The broader track-tuned suspension is for elevated road holding and cornering potential, and larger brakes ensure excellent handling and increased driver confidence, says Genesis.

The interior includes Alcantara, quilted leather, and carbon fibre inserts featuring a blue-coloured weave.

Other details are not yet available.



MINI ACEMAN TO ARRIVE IN FOURTH QUARTER

The Mini Aceman EV is expected in Australia and New Zealand in Q4 this year, with pricing to follow.

It will come in two variants – the Mini Aceman E with a 42.5kWh battery providing an estimated 294–310km range, (electricity consumption combined: 14,9–14,1kWh/100km) and the Mini Aceman SE with a 54.2kWh battery giving an estimated 382–407km range (WLTP), electricity consumption combined 14,8–13,9kWh/100km.

"The Mini Aceman brings a new level of excitement to our all-electric lineup, packed with a truly enjoyable immersive digital experience," says Mini head **Stefanie Wurst**, adding it's "perfect for navigating crowded city streets while maintaining the versatility and functionality of a crossover and the

go-kart feeling you can expect from a Mini".

"I am certain that the sleek design, the performance, and the versatility as a five-seater crossover will make the Mini Aceman a resounding success."

The 135kW electric motor generates 290Nm torque in the Mini Aceman E, the car able to accelerate from zero to 100km/h in 7.9 seconds and reach a 160km/h top speed.

The Mini Aceman SE's 160kW motor provides 330Nm torque, acceleration from zero to 100km/h in 7.1 seconds and a 170km/h top speed.

Luggage space is 300 litres, while numerous adjustment options enable this capacity to be extended individually to as much as 1005 litres.

Roof rails are standard and wheel

options range from 17-inch to 19-inch. The Aceman is available in "Classic" and "Favoured" trims.

The battery can be charged via AC with 11kW, while DC fast charging is possible in the Mini Aceman E with 75kW and in the Aceman SE with up to 95kW, allowing the battery to be charged from 10 to 80% in just under 30 minutes at a fast-charging station.

When Mini Navigation is activated, the high-voltage battery can be set to the ideal temperature for efficient charging in advance, depending on weather conditions.

The Mini App provides a convenient overview of the charging process, even if the customer is not near the vehicle.



TOYOTA RAV4 BEATS FORD RANGER IN HISTORIC APRIL SALES RESULT

Australia's automotive industry continues its unprecedented growth trajectory, setting a record for April and achieving the highest-ever year-to-date new vehicle sales result.

Figures released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) show that 97,202 vehicles were sold in April 2024, propelling the year-to-date sales to 401,654.

This is a substantial increase of more than 50,515 vehicles compared with the same year-to-date point in 2023.

The Toyota **RAV4** was Australia's top-selling vehicle with sales of 5857, followed by the Ford **Ranger** (5569), Toyota **Hilux** (4693), Ford **Everest** (2400) and Isuzu Ute **D-Max** (2380).

Toyota was the market leader with sales of 20,771, followed by **Ford** (8648), **Mazda** (7301), **Kia** (6653) and **Mitsubishi** (5314).

FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber** says the continued growth in the market has seen the industry break ten record monthly sales results in the past year.

"April's result highlights strong consumer confidence in purchasing new vehicles, surpassing our expectations and is a testament to consumer choice and the industry's resilience in a challenging economic landscape," Weber says.

The demand for new vehicles has been

buoyed by a strong market appetite for SUVs and Light Commercial Vehicles, consistent with trends observed in the year's first quarter.

The SUV category continues to dominate sales, representing 55.7% of the total market share in April.

Light Commercials held steady, claiming 22% of sales, reflecting ongoing demand for vehicles that meet Australians' work and lifestyle requirements. Passenger vehicles accounted for 17.8% of sales.

Hybrid and Plug-in Hybrid vehicles saw an increase, capturing 18.3% of the market compared to 7.5% in the previous year. However, Battery Electric Vehicles saw a slight decrease to 6.4% of new car sales, a decrease from 7.9% at the same time last year.

"We are witnessing a shift in consumer preferences towards more sustainable and efficient vehicles," Weber says.

Sales across every State and Territory increased compared with April 2023.

Sales in the Australian Capital Territory were up by 14.5% (1444); New South Wales 16.9% (29,263); Queensland 14.8% (20,872); South Australia 33.5% (6789); Victoria 19.2% (26,492); Western Australia 18.9% (9806), Tasmania 31.9% (1677) and Northern Territory 12.9% (859).

TOP 10 BRANDS



1. TOYOTA 20,771



2. FORD 8648



3. MAZDA 7301



4. KIA 6653



5. MITSUBISHI 5314

4X4 UTEs



1. Ford Ranger
5089



2. Toyota HiLux
4029



3. Isuzu Ute D-Max
1788



4. Mitsubishi Triton
1082



5. Mazda BT-50
860



6. Toyota Landcruiser
70 PU/CC
801



7. Volkswagen Amarok
729



8. GWM Ute
608



9. Nissan Navara
508



10. LDV T60
368

SUV SMALL <\$40K



1. MG ZS
1707



2. Hyundai Kona
1303



3. Toyota Corolla Cross
1180



4. GWM Haval Jolion
1101



5. Mitsubishi ASX
978



6. Mazda CX-30
927



7. Subaru Crosstrek
818



8. Volkswagen T-roc
762



9. Mitsubishi Eclipse
Cross
652



10. Kia Seltos
613

TOP 10 BRANDS



6. HYUNDAI 5185



7. ISUZU UTE 4256



8. MG 3781



9. GWM 3330



10. SUBARU 3246

HYBRIDS AND PHEVS POPULAR

Hybrids and plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) are the biggest winners in the latest VFACTS figures for new vehicles released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI).

Both saw a notable increase, capturing 18.3% of the market compared to 7.5% in the previous year, it says.

However, battery electric vehicles (BEVs) saw a slight decrease in sales accounting for 6.4 % of new sales, a decrease from 7.9% at the same time last year, the FCAI adds.

"We are witnessing a shift in consumer preferences towards more sustainable and efficient vehicles," says FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber**.

April 2024 totals show electric new vehicle sales reached 6194 – down 5.1% on April 2023's 6530 but up 32.3% in year-to-date (YTD) figures from 23,926 to 31,662.

Hybrids rocketed to 16,466 sales last month, up 194.5% compared to April 2023's 5592, and up 138.2% in YTD comparisons from 21,693 to 51,669.

PHEVs rose 138.5% in April comparisons (from 545 to 1100) and 135.6% in YTD comparisons (from 2006 to 4726).

Electrics climbed 41% (2002 in April 2023 to 2822 in April 2024) in the passenger category, and 34.3% YTD (10,479 to 14,070).

In the same category, hybrids were up 170.2% in monthly comparisons (1328 to 3588), 153.2% in YTD comparisons (5425 to 13,737) and PHEVs rose from a low base (30 in April 2023 to 85 last month – 186.7%) and 106 YTD 2023 to 296 YTD 2024 – 179.2%.

Electric vehicle sales dropped in the popular SUV category in April 2024, going down 26.5% (from 4515 in April 2023 to 3318 last month), although increasing 30.3% in YTD comparisons (from 13,409 to 17,474).

Hybrids soared in the SUV sector to 11,600 from 4264 in April last year – up 172% and were up 1123.3% in YTD comparisons from 16,268 to 36,332.

PHEVs went from 515 in April 2023 to 1214 last month – up 135.7%, while YTD comparisons in the SUV category show a 133.2% rise (from 1900 to 4430).

In the light commercial category, electrics rose from 13 to 54 (315.4%) in



April comparisons and from 38 to 118 in YTD comparisons.

Hybrids went from zero in April 2023 and YTD 2023 light commercial comparisons to 1278 and 1600 respectively.

Meanwhile, the FCAI has welcomed the Albanese Government's announcement to expand the New Energy Apprenticeships Program.

This initiative marks a significant advancement in preparing Australia's workforce for the future of the automotive industry, particularly in the rapidly growing EV sector, the FCAI says.

The FCAI says it recognises the critical role this expanded program plays in equipping apprentices with both

traditional and new technology skills, necessary for the transition towards a more sustainable automotive market.

"By including a broader scope of eligible apprenticeships and removing the exclusive focus on clean energy, the program aligns with the practical realities of the industry's evolution."

Weber says he supports increased funding towards recharging infrastructure too.

"These steps are crucial for supporting the integration of EVs into the Australian market and will drive consumer confidence and other target areas needed to support a strong and reliable transport sector."

ELECTRIC, PHEV AND HYBRID SALES					APRIL 2024			
Total Market	Month		YTD		Variance +/- Vol. & %			
	2024	2023	2024	2023	MTH	YTD	MTH	YTD
ELECTRIC								
Passenger	2,822	2,002	14,070	10,479	820	3,591	41.0%	34.3%
SUV Private	3,318	4,515	17,474	13,409	-1,197	4,065	-26.5%	30.3%
Light Commercial Non-Private	54	13	118	38	41	80	315.4%	210.5%
Sub Total	6,194	6,530	31,662	23,926	-336	7,736	-5.1%	32.3%
HYBRID								
Passenger Private	3,588	1,328	13,737	5,425	2,260	8,312	170.2%	153.2%
SUV Private	11,600	4,264	36,332	16,268	7,336	20,064	172.0%	123.3%
Sub Total	15,188	5,592	50,069	21,693	9,596	28,376	171.6%	130.8%
PHEV								
Passenger Private	86	30	296	106	56	190	186.7%	179.2%
SUV Private	1,214	515	4,430	1,900	699	2,530	135.7%	133.2%
Sub Total	1,300	545	4,726	2,006	755	2,720	138.5%	135.6%
Total	22,682	12,667	86,457	45,619	10,015	40,838	79.1%	89.5%