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OCTOBER 2023 | THE AUSTRALIAN VEHICLE DEALER'S NEWS SOURCE

OPTIMUS ACQUIRES AUTOPACT P.03

BAYFORD



■ 04

MAHINDRA WANTS
65 DEALERS

■ 07

TASMANIAN BUYS
FRM HINO

■ 09

PENTANA LIVE
2023

CHALK AND CHEESE

The September new vehicle markets in Australia and New Zealand couldn't have been more like chalk and cheese, they were completely different.

While Australia enjoyed yet another new record for the September 2023 sales month up 18.3% to 110,702 units, New Zealand was the polar opposite, 10,909 sales for September 2023 were 26% lower than September 2022, 20% lower than the monthly average for 2022 (13,641 units) and 12.4% lower than the monthly average so far for 2023.

But the interesting part of the story on both sides of the Tasman is electrification.

In New Zealand there was a significant shift toward electrification in September because the centre-right opposition party (National) which is tipped to win the general election on October 14, has indicated it will scrap all incentives on electrified vehicles by December 31.

Unsurprisingly in spite of higher interest rates and falling house prices, New Zealand buyers reacted. A spike in consumer demand resulted in the BEV segment share jumping from an average of 13.9% (since January 2022) to a staggering 24.9% in September with 2029 units sold.

The top three models were the Tesla **Model Y** (697 units), MG 4 (250), and the BYD **Atto 3** (136).

PHEVs comprised 9.4% (768 units) of the New Zealand light passenger segment in September up from a previous average of 6.7%. The top three models were Mitsubishi **Outlander** (220 units), followed by Mitsubishi **Eclipse Cross** (157), and the Mini **Countryman** (69).

Hybrids comprised 26.9% (2190 units) of the New Zealand light passenger segment in September, up from a prior average of 19.3%.

The top three models were Toyota **RAV4** (495),

followed by the Toyota Corolla (269), and the Ford Escape (154).

In comparison ICE vehicles comprised 38.8% (3163 units) of the New Zealand light passenger segment in September, the polar opposite of Australia.

In Australia, battery electric vehicles accounted for 8% of sales while electrified vehicles (battery electric, hybrid, and plug-in hybrid) recorded 18.3% of sales last month.

The Tesla **Model Y** was the market leading BEV with 3811 sales, sitting in overall third place in the top 10 table behind the Ford **Ranger** with 5429 sales and the market leading Toyota HiLux with 5776.

Petrol is still the leading motive power in passenger cars and SUV, 11,503 and 38,314 units respectively. Diesel was accounted for by 1304 passenger vehicles and 11,336 SUVs. There were 3038 hybrid passenger vehicles sold in September and 7100 hybrid SUVs.

There were 2714 fully electric passenger cars sold in September and 6090 fully electric SUVs. There were 52 plug-in hybrid passenger cars sold and 1212 plug-in hybrid SUVs.

In light commercial, as expected, diesel led the market with 20,974 sales, petrol with 2802 sales, and 17 fully electric light commercial vehicles found a new home.

So, the combined passenger, SUV, and light commercial market for Australia in September was dominated by petrol sales (52,619), followed by diesel (33,614), electric (8821), hybrid (10,138), and PHEV (1264).

There's a lot of work to do if the country is going to meet its goal of reducing transport emissions.

Enjoy your reading this month.

Best regards,

Robert Barry
EDITOR **AUTOTALK**



OPTIMUS EXPANDS AUSTRALIAN Foothold WITH AUTOPACT ACQUISITION

Japan's Optimus Group which is listed on the Tokyo stock exchange is expanding its footprint in Australia with the acquisition of a majority shareholding in the privately owned Autopact automotive dealership group.

Autopact operates 28 dealerships, representing 35 brands in Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. It services the volume, premium, luxury and commercial vehicle segments.

Essentially, Optimus Australia Pty Ltd will acquire the Autopact shares held by majority shareholder Archer Capital and founder **John Eastham** in a sell down.

Co-founder **Garry Crick** will remain a shareholder and will continue his role as chairperson.

Optimus Australia currently holds a 20% stake in the OzCar used vehicle business which will increase to 30%, and it also holds a stake in the Blue Flag vehicle data platform.

Currently the Australian arm of Optimus is run by automotive industry veteran **John Startari** who says that Autopact, OzCar, and Blue Flag will continue to operate independently of each other.

A former service manager, Startari was involved previously in the Proton Australia distribution business for more than 15 years and also worked with the Citroen and Peugeot brands.

"The Autopact acquisition is a strategic investment aimed at expanding our footprint in Australia and diversifying the operations of Optimus into automotive related assets," Startari says.

"There's no change to the structure or operations of Blue Flag as a result of this acquisition. The businesses may explore synergies but this will be done on an arm's length basis."

Startari says Optimus Australia will operate a different business model to that in New Zealand, where its heavily entrenched in the Japanese used import vehicle trade.

"As a logistics provider, supply is determined by dealers based on the demand from their customers. Optimus Australia don't influence these decisions.



"Australia is a relatively new market for Optimus and operates with a relevant strategy. There are no plans at this stage to undertake a similar strategy in New Zealand."

Optimus Group says buying Autopact will accelerate its growth strategy in the Australia and will position the company to support its OEM partners in expanding, especially with the growth in the EV segment.

Once completed, this agreement represents the expansion of the company's footprint in the Australian market and aligns with the group's global strategic direction.

"Optimus Group has a global business model in the automotive sector, with operations spread across Japan, New Zealand, and Australia offering a full complement of end-to-end automotive solutions," says Optimus Group

president Nobuya Yamanaka.

"Our acquisition of the Autopact business will provide the opportunity to expand our route to market into Australia in line with the growth ambitions and strategic direction of the group."

Autopact chief executive James Welch says.

Autopact has been "a success story of growth since its inception, growing to become one of Australia's largest dealership groups".

"The sale of Autopact is one of the final remaining investments within Archer Capital's Fund 5."

"I look forward to welcoming the Optimus Group alongside our chair **Garry Crick** as Autopact continues its growth trajectory."

MAHINDRA AUSTRALIA PLANS 65 DEALERS BY CHRISTMAS

Mahindra Australia has doubled the size of its parts warehouse capacity by opening a new facility in Willawong, Queensland, as it pushes to have more than 65 dealerships operating by Christmas.

Mahindra Australia says the new facility at 123 Gardens Drive, Willawong will boost network growth and enhance after-sales service.

It says Australia is central to its Go Global vision and will play an important role in broadening its reach internationally.

The successful launches of the XUV700 and Scorpio SUVs have cemented its growing impact in Australia and, coupled with a rising demand for the existing pick-up line, confirm positive growth, it says.

Mahindra is increasing its Australia dealer network. The targeted expansion meets rising customer demand and reflects Mahindra's ongoing commitment to providing products and services.

"With the expansion of our dealer



network well underway and expected to exceed 65 dealers nationally by Christmas, we needed a bigger warehouse to support our customers and our dealers," says Mahindra Australia automotive business head **Russel Thiele**.

Mahindra Australia says the new parts centre elevates its operational capabilities.

It has more than 2000 additional product lines, primarily to support the XUV700 and Scorpio SUVs. The added parts capacity also streamlines the

introduction of future vehicle models.

The centre aims to reduce turnaround times through fast, reliable parts supply, enhancing the overall customer experience.

"It's an extremely important milestone in our journey in Australia for the brand," says Mahindra Australia national manager **Ankit Taneja**.

"We are well equipped with over 7000 part lines which are readily available to serve our consumers."

BUYERS ENCOURAGED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BEV SUPPLY

The Australian Automotive Dealer Association (AADA) says consumers should take advantage of the ready supply of Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV) available in showrooms.

Dealers across Australia have indicated that wait times for buyers hoping to get their hands on a BEV have been slashed in recent months.

Many variants are available and in stock now, and for some brands there's as little as a one month wait time for new orders.

"There's no shortage of BEVs available for purchase here in Australia. In many instances customers can walk into a dealership and drive out in a new BEV in a matter of days," says AADA chief executive **James Voortman**.

"In particular, BEVs at the more affordable end of the spectrum have

strong levels of supply which is good news for customers looking to make the transition.

"It's really important that we stop talking down the supply of BEVs in Australia because they're available for customers to purchase and take delivery soon.

"We've canvassed dealers across the country and checked delivery timeframes for online distributors. The supply situation for BEVs is very healthy.

"We know there have been reports in the media recently of long wait times for customers who are looking to purchase a BEV.

"However, customers can be rest assured that there's plenty of stock and while there are some variants that continue to have extended wait times, supply issues are being resolved quickly, allowing customers to get into their new BEV sooner.



"Customers should take note of the various state government BEV purchase incentives, including in NSW where buyers can access BEV stamp duty exemptions and rebates for contracts to purchase completed before January 1, 2024.

"Supply of some popular ICE and hybrid vehicles remains an issue, but the situation is improving," he says.

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MTAA: FULL EMPLOYMENT AN ADMIRABLE GOAL

In its new White Paper on jobs and opportunities the Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) recognises the Australian Government's sharp focus on full employment as a key aim.

"Full employment is a key and admirable goal for the Australian economy," says MTAA CEO **Geoff Gwilym**. "However, meeting this target means employers and employees need to exercise all available workplace flexibilities to achieve these aims."

Focusing more on foundations skills in schools and training programs will add to capability, improve workplace productivity, and enable greater participation by people who struggle to find employment that suits their individual needs.

MTAA supports the need to raise resources and funding for training providers.

It urges the Government to ensure private training providers, along with TAFE institutes, can access the same funding to deliver the same training.

And that they can access resource funding equitably, either in or outside TAFE.

Industry registered training organisations, who form a key conduit between industry, training and employment, also need particular focus, MTAA says.

Providing quality training will be critical for industries, including those, like automotive, that face critical skills shortages.

MTAA and its state and territory members support linking VET qualifications with higher education pathways.

And it encourages the Government to acknowledge that many industries, like automotive, are in a steep transition curve, with whole sectors re-skilling



GEOFF GWILYM

to meet the needs of the digital world and environmental targets.

"Mechanics today have to be mechanical and digital technicians at the same time," Gwilym says.

"Working on new vehicles requires electronic diagnosis and computer analytics, the same as someone working on a wind turbine or a complex computerised system.

"Care needs to be taken to ensure a scarce number of trade aspirants leaving school won't jump to higher-level apprenticeships at the expense of the traditional trades.

"Automotive alone still needs 15,000 new apprentices to enter the industry every year and any reduction means vehicle service and repairs take longer, which is bad for the economy and productivity.

"MTAA supports a greater focus on matching incoming temporary and permanent migrants..."

Automotive has been identified as the sixth most in demand occupation in Australia, and with more than 30,000 vacant jobs nationally, it must ensure it matches tightly migration with genuine jobs and employment, Gwilym adds.

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ISUZU APPOINTS NEW CORPORATE SERVICES CHIEF

Isuzu Australia (IAL) has appointed **Ashwin Iyer** as its chief of corporate services.

He succeeds **Paul Evans**, who steps into a new role as IAL director and chief risk officer.

Previously, Iyer was head of information technology, operating from Isuzu's head office at Truganina in Melbourne.

In his new role, Iyer will oversee several divisions including the departments of people and culture, financial control, and IT.

"The appointment of Ashwin as chief of corporate services comes at a time of exceptional growth for Isuzu Trucks," says IAL director and chief operation officer **Andrew Harbison**.

"Ensuring the corporate side of the business is supported with the right people is crucial to our ongoing ability to meet this demand.

"Ashwin brings to bear a dedicated focus honed through experience working in the administrative, IT, and governance sides of our operation.

"He's now applying that to the

important areas of financial control and our people and culture department...

"Paul Evans is on-hand to assist with this transition as he heads into an important position leading our risk management team," he says.

Iyer says he's confident that Isuzu has the structures and people in place to meet the business' ever-changing needs.

"So much has changed with COVID and Isuzu is no different in this regard, with the company adapting and pivoting to overcome considerable challenges during this period.

"One of the key strengths of the business remains in its strong culture which includes our leadership and ability to work as a cohesive team across the national stage.

"Having things in order isn't just about what happens at head office in Melbourne. It flows down to our teams across the country, our relationships with dealers and, crucially, supporting them as they deliver the Isuzu truck ownership experience...



"For me, the priorities are to ensure the corporate services side of the business remains strong across its key channels.

"I'm confident we have the structures and people in place to ensure that the challenges now and into the future can be met," Iyer says.

FORD APPOINTS TYRECONNECT EXCLUSIVE TYRE PROGRAM DISTRIBUTOR

Ford Australia has appointed Tyreconnect as the new exclusive distributor for its Ford Tyre Program.

Tyreconnect says it offers a comprehensive selection of tyres online and streamlines the supply chain by collaborating with manufacturers, logistics providers, and dealer groups.

Ford dealers who wish to enrol in the Ford Tyre Program, can do so via their regional office or through Tyreconnect's business development managers.

"Ford wanted to reimagine the tyre program and increase the service levels to our dealers and customers when a tyre repair or replacement is needed and the Tyreconnect business model achieves this for us," says FCSD national marketing and sales manager.

Major tyre brands can be accessed via Tyreconnect's single platform



– resulting in fast delivery, a reduction in downtime and an increase in customer retention for dealerships.

Tyreconnect says dealers can benefit from the Ford Tyre Program by accessing all leading tyre brands, combined with rapid same-day delivery for metro dealerships, and automated invoicing.

"Our industry-leading technology removes the complexity out of tyre sourcing and helps make tyre

management simpler and easier for Ford dealerships," says Carsales tyre holdings group general manager **Gavin Cachia** says.

"We also provide sales and product training, and support for service advisers so they have the knowledge and confidence to make the best recommendations to their customers – and free up time for the rest of the team to focus on customer service.

EIGHT-YEAR WARRANTY FOR FOTON ELECTRIC TRUCKS

Foton is introducing an eight-year/300,000km power battery warranty for the Australian market.

The extended warranty is available on all new orders, dealer stock and demonstrator models, with the Foton T5 EV model also featuring a five-year/200,000km general vehicle warranty.

"We're particularly proud of the Foton T5 EV, which has quickly taken a decisive sales lead in the all-electric light truck space," says **Bill Gillespie**, Foton Mobility Distribution's general manager of light-duty vehicles.

"Looking at the EV market here in Australia, this offering easily exceeds any other similar support available, allowing Foton owners to be sure they're investing in high-quality, yet affordable technology.

"Furthermore, the trucks are backed by a nationwide dealer network from Cairns to Perth, and are supported by 24/7 roadside assistance, as provided by NTI Truck Assist," he says.

The Foton T5 EV's main point of difference is its 3500kg braked towing capacity, making it highly adaptable, and capable of slotting into more fleets.



It's available as a ready-to-go T5 EV tipper, featuring an Australian-made steel tipper body, making it suitable for use in municipalities and landscaping.

It's a flexible package, available with a rated GVM of 4500kg for car licence operation, or 6000kg for light rigid licensed drivers, with either option able to tow.

From a financial perspective, the T5 EV features around 20% lower upfront and operational costs.

Uptime isn't compromised, with DC fast charging allowing for full recharging in 1.5 hours, or the standard 11kW

AC onboard charger can recharge the drive battery in 7.2 hours, allowing for overnight turnarounds.

The T5 EV has a fully loaded range of 180km. Safety equipment includes a low-speed pedestrian warning system, an electronic braking and stability package, dual SRS airbags, and reversing radar and buzzer.

To be eligible for the new power battery warranty, all vehicle servicing must be completed according to the owner's handbook service schedule.

HINO ANNOUNCES NEW OWNER OF TASMANIAN DEALERSHIPS

Hino has announced that Tasmanian **Edward Jones** is the new owner of FRM Hino which has dealerships in Launceston, Hobart, and Devonport. **Jones was a former director and chief operating officer of the Local Motor Group which is owned by the Tony White Group, and says he's looking forward to returning to his roots in the showroom.**

"After an 18 year career in passenger cars including as a former Toyota dealer principal, I'm excited to join and lead the FRM team and join the Hino brand," Jones says.

"The future is really exciting for FRM Hino. We have an excellent team in place that will continue to deliver exceptional levels of service to our customers.

"For me, as a born and bred Tasmanian, this is a chance to be

a part of a culture and team that's committed to its local community.

"Over the last seven years, the former owners of FRM Hino relocated all three FRM branches in Hobart, Launceston, and Devonport to new and improved premises, and we still have exciting opportunities ahead.

"We're currently in the planning phase for a workshop extension in Launceston to increase the service bay capacity," he says.

Hino Australia brand and franchise vice president **Richard Emery**, says Jones brings "a wealth of experience and professionalism to the Hino team".

"Tasmania remains an important market for Hino with tourism, mining, agriculture, and other primary industries presenting opportunities within the light,



medium and heavy-duty segments.

"I would also like to pay tribute to former managing director David Mills and the other former owners of the business for their dedication and passion to the Hino brand and business over the last 14 years," he says.

Hino Australia has more than 65 dealerships and services centres nationwide.



STEWART WINS BATHURST DRIVE IN TOYOTA 86 SERIES

Ben Stewart has won a fully funded drive in the final round of the Toyota Gazoo Racing Australia (TGRA) 86 Series at Bathurst after coming out top in the TGRA scholarship series evaluation day at Sydney Motorsport Park.

The 18-year-old beat other drivers – **Charlie Parker, Shayne Nowickij and Summer Parkerm** – who were selected for evaluation from 15 eligible drivers.

Forty drivers contested the inaugural scholarship series across five events at Sydney Motorsport Park, Phillip Island, and Queensland Raceway during 2023.

Toyota Australia chief marketing officer **Vin Naidoo** says Stewart has the qualities needed to continue to grow as a race driver.

"We initiated the TGRA 86 Series as an affordable grassroots race series and over the past eight years it has become recognised as a career pathway for young drivers to grow their skills and hone their race craft in a safe environment.

"The introduction of the entry-level scholarship series this year, further expanded that and I'd like to congratulate Ben on winning the drive in the main TGRA 86 Series season closer at Bathurst.

"Ben demonstrated not only the skill needed to compete with the best of our drivers but also the maturity, drive and



commitment to continue to grow and learn..."

The four drivers selected for the evaluation day weren't those won had won the most races, but individuals who showed they have what it takes to become a professional driver.

Each driver was assessed on general knowledge of the broader sporting and technical rules, media technique, fitness and conditioning, car control, and on-track performance.

They were judged on by Walkinshaw Andretti United Supercars team principal **Bruce Stewart**, former and current Supercars drivers **Steve Johnson** and **Warren Luff**, and Australian Rally Champion **Harry Bates**.

The judges praised Stewart for his high level of performance in the various off-track activities, along with his speed and consistency in the car.

The TGRA scholarship was introduced this year and run over five rounds as an entry-level Toyota 86 race series.

The first three rounds of the scholarship series in NSW and Victoria were pre-qualifying events for new or returning drivers who finished outside the top 20 in the 2022 TGRA 86 Series, and who wished to race in the main series that began in Townsville in July.

Toyota will run the five-round TGRA scholarship in 2024 and says there's high interest already.



PENTANA LIVE: AN UNMISSABLE VIRTUAL AUTOMOTIVE EVENT

On October 17 and 18, Pentana Solutions' online virtual event, Pentana Live will bring its audience unrestricted access to automotive technology experts and thought leaders.

Pentana Live 2023 will deliver more than 30 educational sessions that cater to professionals across all automotive sectors, making it a must-attend for anyone involved in fixed operations, IT, sales, administration, or finance.

To accommodate their busy schedules, attendees are encouraged to log in and out of the platform to attend the sessions that align with their interests.

Pentana Live 2023 will reach audiences across the world, with sessions scheduled in nine different time zones

and available in multiple languages, providing a global perspective to the automotive industry.

Interactive workshops with resident experts are one of the highlights. The hands-on sessions provide practical advice to increase efficiency in day-to-day business operations and guidance to future-proof any automotive related business.

Pentana Live will also host a line-up of keynote speakers who are thought leaders in the automotive industry.

They will share their insights, experiences, and visions for the future, offering attendees a unique perspective on where the industry is headed.

Check the side bar to get a glimpse of what is on offer at Pentana Live 2023.

To view the full event agenda, go to **Pentana Live**. In a rapidly evolving industry where technology continues to reshape the landscape, Pentana Live offers a unique opportunity to stay informed and connected.

Register at
<https://www.pentana-live.com/>
 to secure a spot.

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP: HOW TO LEVERAGE SOFTWARE TO DRIVE COST SAVINGS IN YOUR DEALERSHIP

Tuesday, October 17, 12pm [AEDT] in Workshop

Join Pentana Solutions' sales manager, **Shane McDuffie** as he delves into a variety of ways dealership owners and managers can harness the power of software to drive cost savings and enhance operational efficiency.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ACCELERATING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IN AUTO SALES: A ROADMAP TO AI-DRIVEN EFFICIENCIES

Wednesday, October 18, 12pm [AEDT] Auditorium 1

Tune in to CEO Neo/ Eastern Press, co-founder CampaignAgent, **Seth Watts** as he demystifies the world of Artificial Intelligence and its practical applications for car dealerships. Learn how AI algorithms can personalise customer interactions, optimise client acquisition, and analyse business data.

RESIDENT EXPERT: AUTOMATED CUSTOMER LIFE CYCLES ARE CHANGING THE CRM GAME

Wednesday, October 18, 2pm [AEDT] in Auditorium 2

Learn from Pentana Solution's Resident CRM Strategic Consultant, **Lys Chin** and discover how the industry-leading CRM, DealerSocket can manage all customer touchpoints and reduce time spent on labour intensive manual processes. An entire CRM customer lifecycle can be automated and work alongside any DMS.

ROUND TABLE: TECHNOLOGY LEADERS IN THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Wednesday, October 18, 11am [AEDT] in Auditorium 1

This round table features Steve Kloss (CEO Pentana Solutions), **Stephen Lester** (CEO Cox Automotive Australia), **Jens Monsees** (CEO Infomedia) and **Gary Martin** (CEO Marque Group). These experts will discuss the evolving role of technology in the automotive industry and explore emerging trends as they look towards the future.



NZ DEALER GROUP RAISES MORE THAN NZ \$200K FOR CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

New Zealand's Giltrap Group which distributes and sells premium, luxury, and supercars has raised more than NZ\$200,000 for Starship, NZ's national children's hospital.

The Starship Supercar Show fundraiser on September 16 and 17 gave thousands of Kiwis a close-up look at some of the world's finest cars in the Giltrap head office in **Grey Lynn**, Auckland.

The 2023 event repeated the success of the inaugural Starship Supercar Show with tickets selling out three days before the doors opened.

More than NZ\$100 million worth of exotic machinery was on show across four floors, the rare and in some cases, priceless collection loaned by private owners from around NZ.

Giltrap Group's joint managing director **Michael Giltrap** says the car owners' contribution was a major reason for the show's success.

"It's all down to the quality of cars, and this couldn't happen without the



owners who share their hugely valuable cars without hesitation."

Donations are still coming in, but the total raised for the Starship Foundation has already passed NZ\$200,000.

"This absolutely phenomenal contribution will help our national children's hospital bring world-class healthcare to Starship children across the country," says Starship Foundation chief executive **Joanna Simon**.

to page 10...

...from page 11

She says the Giltrap Group, has supported the Starship Foundation for more than two decades, and she thanked the supercar owners "who contributed their beautiful cars, the volunteers who ensured everything ran smoothly, and every single person who purchased a ticket".

This year's Supercar show featured three New Zealand vehicle launches, something not seen at a local car show for several years.

The Lotus Eletre, Polestar 3, and Chevrolet Corvette Z06 were unveiled for the first time in the country.

"This was a celebration of amazing cars in support of a great cause, and it has exceeded our expectations." Giltrap says.

"Along with the individual car owners, we also get great support from across the New Zealand automotive industry. Everyone really does come together to make sure we have the best possible collection of supercars," he adds.

Planning has begun for the 2025 Starship Supercar Show.





ROYAL VISIT MARKS JLR FACTORY'S 60TH BIRTHDAY

Princess Anne, the Princess Royal, was given an insight into electrification plans when she visited Jaguar Land Rover's factory at Halewood in England to mark 60 years of manufacturing there.

JLR is reimagining Halewood an all-electric factory.

Ford opened the Merseyside assembly plant in 1963 to produce the Ford Anglia, and the Ford Escort was built there from 1967 to 2001.

Under Ford's ownership production of JLR models began with the Jaguar X-Type in 2001.

When Ford sold JLR to Tata Motors in 2008, it allowed the Indian manufacturer to retain the vehicle production plant adjacent to a transmission factory operated by Ford and partner Getrag.

Local charity, The Inclusive Hub, was invited to the royal occasion after being selected by employees for a vehicle donation.

Princess Anne presented the charity with a Halewood-built Land Rover Discovery Sport. The donation recognised The Inclusive Hub's work in empowering local people of all ages and abilities through exercise and education.

JLR Halewood operations directors **Trevor Leeks** says that though Halewood's history began 60 years ago



under different ownership, many of its staff have long connections through that era into today's manufacturing.

"We look forward to an exciting new chapter as the plant progresses at pace to an all-electric future building the next generation of vehicles as we deliver our reimagine strategy and our ambition to be the world's leading modern luxury car manufacturer," he says.

The Inclusive Hub's director and coach **Liam Starkey** says JLR's donation will help the charity provide life-changing

support for more people who are differently abled and socially isolated".

"The new vehicle will help us to give more people access to our fitness sessions, school outreach sessions, mental health meetings, parent support groups and food bank hamper deliveries."

Princess Anne also visited the Queen's Green Canopy Orchard, a sustainable eco-system which was planted at Halewood in 2022 to mark the Platinum Jubilee.



MTA NSW OPENS SOLAR-POWERED PUBLIC EV CHARGING STATION

The Motor Traders Association of New South Wales has opened a new solar-powered electric vehicle (EV) charging station for public use at its headquarters on Parramatta Road in Burwood.

In partnership with the National Renewable Network (NRN) and Wallbox, the launch is the latest in a series of steps by MTA NSW to help increase EV adoption.

The charging station will provide easy access for drivers and MTA NSW chief executive **Stavros Yallouridis** says it's a win for both locals and visitors.

"We're thrilled to unveil this next generation of electric vehicle chargers which will be powered by solar energy and provide the public with a high-quality, cutting-edge charging solution.

"Increasing the accessibility of charging stations and improving EV infrastructure is crucial in promoting the uptake of EVs and fuel-efficient vehicles in Australia."

Designed by infrastructure company Wallbox, the station consists of a Supernova 60kW charger with split-charge, allowing two vehicles to be charged at the same time.

Six 10kW modules work together to provide maximum power while maintaining their operational independence.

The charger can add up to 100 kilometres of range to a battery in under 15 minutes.

"The Supernova charger has been developed with reliability and scalability at the forefront to ensure a seamless experience for both charge-point operators and drivers," says Wallbox Australia and New Zealand country manager **Reece Davis**.

The Supernova is among Wallbox's most successful products, with more than 1000 units sold in 32 countries since launching in 2022.

It has won multiple awards including the prestigious iF Product Design Award, one of the world's most important design prizes.

Highlighting MTA NSW's focus on sustainability, the organisation has installed rooftop solar panels designed to offset the energy output of the chargers.

The set-up was made possible through a partnership with the NRN.

"The NRN is excited to be working with the MTA to support their drive towards supporting and expanding the use of EVs in Australia," says National Renewable Network chief executive **Alan Hunter**.

"This is consistent with NRN's own mission to democratise access to renewable energy, including for small



to medium businesses throughout Australia.

"The MTA NSW charging station is powered by solar energy, making it a truly next-generation, energy efficient solution.

"This also serves as a proof point for future EV charging infrastructure, and we hope to see similar models being rolled out more broadly across the state."

CALL FOR FBT EXEMPTION ON DOMESTIC EV CHARGING

A share of the \$20 billion being spent to connect renewable energy projects to the national grid should instead fund the extension of fringe benefits tax exemptions to cover not only EVs but also household battery storage, solar panels, and EV charging.

So says he Partners in Performance consultancy.

Partner **Brian Innes** says Australia's plan to reach a renewable energy target of 82% by 2030 is under threat.

"A range of factors including community opposition to large transmission lines criss-crossing their properties or traditional lands, a global shortage of construction materials, slow supply chains and a shortage of skilled labour, are all slowing down the roll-out of renewable energy.

"And that's only being made worse by burdensome state and territory planning laws and other red tape," Innes says.

"What we should be doing is prioritising our spending for speed."

From July 1, 2022 employers in Australia didn't pay FBT on eligible electric cars and associated car expenses. '

However, these associated car expenses don't extend to home charging stations, batteries, or solar panels.

Innes says a report released by Energy Consumers Australia arguing for the transition from gas to renewable electricity found an energy-efficient home with solar panels, battery and electric cars could save \$3500 a year by 2030 and \$4320 by 2050 compared with a home using gas appliances and petrol vehicles.

"Australians want to play their part in driving down global emissions but are often prevented from doing so because of the high upfront costs of not only buying an EV but also the cost of a battery at home and the solar panels required to ensure the EV is actually being charged with 100% renewable energy."

Innes says salary-sacrifice packages linked to novated car leases often covered the cost of fuelling a petrol or diesel-powered car.

"So, why shouldn't FBT concessions extend to the capital costs of 'fuelling' an EV," Mr Innes said.

"If you buy an EV with a charger, then you should be able to include a household battery and solar panels as part of the salary sacrifice, because it's used to charge the car instead of relying solely on coal- or gas-powered electricity.

"And any excess solar-powered energy can then be stored in the battery and



used to power the owner's home after dark or fed back into the grid, further driving down emissions.

"By the next federal election cycle, wouldn't it be better to take some of that \$20 billion Rewiring the Nation funding and throw it at EVs and behind-the-meter power generation?

"Support home charging and controllable charging, support virtual power plants (VPPs), support aggregators .

"Governments are allowing the energy retailers to control the VPP space and much of the industry is saying, 'let the aggregators at it; they'll run with it, so give the money to the speedy ones'."



TESLA MODEL Y LEADS NZ MARKET IN SEPTEMBER

In spite of the uncertainty around the future of the Clean Car Discount in New Zealand there was a significant shift towards electrification in the September new vehicle market.

The future of the discount hinges on the upcoming election result, with the current Labour Government planning to continue it but National which is leading in the polls says it will scrap it if elected.

The top three best-selling vehicles for the month were the Tesla **Model Y** (697 units), Toyota **RAV 4** (683 units), and Toyota **Yaris Cross** (316 units).

More than 2029 BEVs were sold in New Zealand in September.

The top three models were the Tesla **Model Y** (697 units), MG **4** (250) followed by BYD **Atto 3** (136).

A spike in consumer demand resulted in the BEV segment share jumping from an average of 13.9%

(since January 2022) to 24.9% in September.

More than 768 PHEVs were sold in New Zealand in September. The top three models were Mitsubishi **Outlander** (220 units), followed by Mitsubishi **Eclipse Cross** (157), and the Mini **Countryman** (69).

PHEVs comprised 9.4% of the light passenger segment in September, up from a prior average of 6.7%.

More than 2190 hybrids (HEV) were sold in New Zealand in September.

The top three models were the Toyota **RAV4** (495 units), Toyota **Corolla** (269), and the Ford **Escape** (154). HEVs comprised 26.9% of the light passenger segment in September, up from a previous average of 19.3%.

Sales of internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles comprised 38.8% of the September light passenger segment.

The overall new vehicle market in New Zealand remained soft in



September at 10,909 units which was 26.7% lower than September 2022 (14,878 units)

The top three overall market leaders in September 2023 were: **Toyota** with 24.2% market share (2644 units), followed by **Ford** with 10.3% (1125), and **Mitsubishi** with 9.2% (1006).

Passenger and SUV registrations of 8150 are 23.1% (2451 units) lower than September 2022.

Toyota retained the market lead for passenger and SUV registrations in September with 23.1% market share (1885 units) followed by **Mitsubishi** with 9.9% (808), and **Tesla** with 9.3% market share (760).

The top three models for September were the Ford **Ranger** (605 units), followed by Toyota **HiLux** (540), and Mitsubishi **Triton** (198).





SAVVY: ONE VEHICLE STOLEN EVERY 11 MINUTES

Financial comparison website, Savvy's 2023 report on car theft in Australia, says that every 11 minutes, a passenger or light commercial vehicle is stolen.

That resulted in 38,187 thefts in 2021.

Queensland had the highest number of individual car thefts in 2021, with more than 11,000.

In contrast, Tasmania, the Northern Territory, and the Australian Capital Territory had the lowest totals, possibly because of their smaller populations.

The impact of COVID-19 on car theft rates has been significant according to Savvy.

It says in 2021, the theft of cars and light commercial vehicles decreased significantly, probably because of lockdowns.

The restrictions imposed during the pandemic may have limited opportunities for thieves to steal cars.

The Holden Commodore VE series is the model that was stolen the most for three consecutive years.

Factors contributing to car theft

TO PROTECT A VEHICLE FROM BEING STOLEN, IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CAR THEFT, SAVVY SAYS.

- **Common car theft prevention measures:** taking simple steps like locking doors, parking in well-lit areas, and keeping car keys in an unexpected or out of the way place within the home.

- **Impact of COVID-19 on car theft rates:** the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns led to a decrease in car thefts. With people staying at home more often, there were fewer opportunities for thieves to steal vehicles.

- **Role of technology in reducing car theft:** advanced security systems and immobilisers have made it much harder for thieves. Features like GPS tracking and remote locking systems provide an added layer of protection.

- **Regional variations in car theft rates:** car theft rates can vary significantly depending on the region. Factors like population density, socioeconomic conditions, and law enforcement efforts can influence the likelihood of car theft.

Nearly 70% of Australians have never had their car stolen or any belongings taken from their cars.

Budget Direct's 2021 Car Theft Survey of 878 Australians, showed 7.4% of Australians have had their car stolen, while 18.2% have had their belongings stolen from their car.

The survey also revealed respondents aged 18 to 24 had the least experience with car theft. Men were more likely than women to have their belongings stolen, possibly because women store their car keys out of sight.

Public perception of car theft risks remains a concern, with many Australians still believing that hot-wiring is a common method of car theft, in spite of advances in security

technology making it nearly impossible.

If a vehicle or belongings are stolen, there's a chance owners may never receive anything back, and more than 70% of Australian victims have experienced.

FOUR KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER WHEN IT COMES TO CAR THEFT RECOVERY AND INSURANCE CLAIMS:

- 1. Stolen vehicle tracking:** using advanced technology, stolen vehicle tracking systems can help authorities locate and recover stolen cars more quickly.
- 2. Insurance claims:** it's crucial to have comprehensive car insurance that covers theft. It will provide financial protection and ease the burden of replacing stolen vehicles or belongings.

- 3. Car theft prevention:** taking proactive measures to secure your vehicle, like installing after-market immobilisers on older vehicles, and parking in well-lit areas. Always secure the keys, as they're needed to start and drive modern vehicles.

- 4. Stolen vehicle investigation:** report the theft to the police immediately. Police will conduct an investigation and gather evidence to increase the chances of recovering stolen vehicles.

Savvy believes inadequate key protection and sneak thefts contribute to the high rates and it's crucial for car owners to take precautions to protect their vehicles.

FRANCHISING CODE REVIEW AN OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE FAIRNESS

The Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) has lodged a submission on the Federal Government's 2023 Franchising Code Review.

Small business minister **Julie Collins** announced a comprehensive review of the Competition and Consumer (Industry Codes – Franchising) Regulation 2014 on August 15, 2023 and appointed **Dr Michael Schaper** to lead it.

MTAA has collaborated with the Victorian Automobile Dealers Association, Farm and Industrial Machinery Dealers Association, the Australian Automotive Dealers Association, Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry to reach best case outcomes for retail automotive franchising.

"The Code review will evaluate previous franchising reforms and bring several reviews under one umbrella, including statutory reviews of the Franchise Disclosure Register and specific new car dealership protections contained within Part 5 of the Code," says MTAA chief executive **Geoff Gwilym**.

The review will consider including farm and industrial, motorcycle, and truck

dealers under Part 5 of the Code.

"The entire Australian franchising system is now under review. As a result, franchisees across the nation are nervous. They require layers of protection.

"This is especially important for the farm and industrial machinery, motorcycle, truck and mechanical repair franchise sector," Gwilym says.

"New car dealers often receive public attention with franchising but, behind the scenes, the vital agricultural, truck and motorcycle sectors have experienced unfair franchisor behaviour, which has cost livelihoods."

MTAA's key responses to the Franchising Code Review are:

- Extend the Franchising Code to cover motorcycle, farm machinery, industrial machinery and truck dealers.
- Extend the protections offered to dealers under the Franchising Code to franchise automotive aftermarket repairers.
- Mandate a service and parts agreement that relates to the motor vehicle dealer agreement that falls within the protective umbrella of the Franchising Code.
- Amend the Franchising Code to



GEOFF GWILYM

recognise the right of dealers to compensation for established goodwill.

- Dealers should receive a minimum five-year term for their dealer agreements to provide more certainty regarding a return on their investment.

"MTAA calls for a fair go for all automotive industry franchisees. We hope the Code review will deliver that for all," Gwilym says.

CAREXPERT COMMITTED TO FURTHER IMPROVEMENT FOR DEALERS

New Car platform CarExpert says it has improved its product offering for its network of Australian dealers.

And it remains committed to offering the pay-per-sale model which it launched to dealers earlier this year.

Unlike other automotive websites with recent pay-per-lead cost increases, CarExpert says it continues to provide complimentary leads to dealers who only pay a fee to CarExpert when the new vehicle is delivered.

Dealers now can accept or decline leads from CarExpert if they're already dealing with a customer, and subscribing to higher tiers grants them greater exclusivity over leads, ensuring they can engage with more potential buyers without the interference of competitors.

CarExpert says its position in the

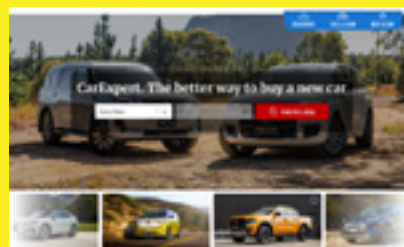
market is growing, with 4.95 million Australian website visits recorded in August, as measured by web traffic tracker SimilarWeb.

The CarExpert YouTube review channel generated 4.4 million views in August 2023 which is 73% growth year-on-year.

The strong increase in new car buying audience translates to increased enquiries, and CarExpert says it has seen a 2.6x boost in the volume of qualified leads in the last quarter compared to the previous one.

Not only does this audience growth provide dealers with an extensive pool of potential customers, but also it offers a new lead source for new car dealers, says CarExpert.

"It's been a phenomenal year of learning and growth," says CarExpert chief executive **Damon Rielly**.



"When we introduced our product to the market earlier this year, we knew it was challenging the status quo.

"We knew it is what the industry, especially dealers, needed to succeed especially as we see the supply and demand curve change."

For additional information about CarExpert's dealer subscription model and its advantages for a dealership, please visit dealers. carexpert.com.au.

ST KILDA SIGNS THREE-YEAR DEAL WITH CHERY

St Kilda Football Club has announced its first automotive partnership, joining forces with Chery Motor Australia.

The three-year deal comes as Chery showcases its new model, the Tiggo 7 Pro, in Australia, with the vehicle unveiled at St Kilda's Trevor Barker Awards on October 3.

Chery becomes the co-principal partner of the club's AFL program and co-major partner of AFLW.

The Chery brand will feature on the back of both teams' guernseys, plus the neckline of the men's jumper. It will also be found on off-field apparel for both teams.

"The automotive sector is an area of business we've been looking to enter for some time, but we feel we've found the perfect partner now in Chery," says St Kilda chief executive **Simon Lethlean**.

"We're both committed to pioneering our respective industries, constantly seeking to innovate and push the boundaries in order to grow and advance.



"To use our night of nights to mark such a special occasion for both businesses is a great first example of the mutual respect of this partnership, and of the excitement we both hold to launch our futures together.

"Announcing this partnership really feels like the perfect way to round out our 150th year," he says.

Founded in 1997, Chinese carmaker Chery exports to more than 80 countries with more than 12 million vehicles sold worldwide.

The Chery group also operates in aviation, shipping, and component

manufacture.

"We are very excited to be partnering with St Kilda FC as their first automotive sponsor, and for the Chery brand to be entering the AFL landscape with the opportunity to connect with the Australian sporting audience," Chery Motor Australia managing director **Andy Zhang** says.

"The Chery brand represents innovation, style and performance, and these attributes align perfectly with the Saints," he says.



MAZDA AUSTRALIA WINS ROY MORGAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AWARD

Mazda has been announced as Australia's major car manufacturer of the year in Roy Morgan's annual customer satisfaction awards.

Roy Morgan interviewed more than 60,000 consumers across Australia, including owners of new and used vehicles.

The survey, conducted from January to December 2022, rated how satisfied consumers were with companies they dealt with in more than 30 industries, including automotive, banking, supermarkets, and telecommunications.

Monthly customer satisfaction winners are recorded in each category throughout the year, with the annual award going to the company with the most monthly wins.

The 2023 accolade is another annual customer satisfaction award won by Mazda which has won the JD Power Customer Service Satisfaction index in recent years.

"This award represents Mazda's ongoing commitment to customer

service and the strong relationship it enjoys with customers nationwide," says Mazda Australia marketing director **Alastair Doak**.

"Mazda Australia and our dealer network has long focused on providing exceptional customer service, and to have that confirmed by customers through Roy Morgan's independent research tells us that we're on the right track.

"Our commitment to constantly improving our customer service sees us continue to look both inside and outside the automotive industry to constantly innovate in pursuit of the ultimate customer experience," he says.

Roy Morgan chief executive **Michelle Levine** says the awards represent more than 280 companies competing in 40 categories for the Roy Morgan customer satisfaction awards".

"While we at Roy Morgan collect and collate the data, the judging panel is made up of customers of the 280 companies – many thousands of them – giving their honest,



unvarnished opinions. That's what makes these awards meaningful and valued.

"The data that underpins the awards comes from real people telling us how they feel about the brands and companies they interact with.

"This massive study provides an accurate, independent and objective measure of how people feel about the companies they give their business to.

"We ask respondents to tell us which companies they deal with in different categories and then to rate how satisfied they are with each," she says.





SAFER TRUCKS FOR AUSTRALIA

The Australian Government has changed the national road vehicle standards to facilitate the supply of safer trucks in a bid to help reduce road trauma while bolstering freight productivity.

The changes are estimated to provide a net benefit of more than \$500 million to the Australian economy.

The Safer Freight Vehicles package includes an increase to the overall width limit from 2.50 to 2.55 metres for new trucks that are fitted with specified safety features.

The specified safety features include devices to reduce blindspots, electronic stability control, advanced emergency braking, a lane departure warning system, better reflective markings, and side guards to stop pedestrians and cyclists from being caught up under the trucks' rear wheels.

Allowing wider trucks will also reduce the number of road freight trips businesses need to take, saving them money and lowering their environmental impact, says federal infrastructure and transport assistant minister Carol Brown.

Additionally, various safety devices and sensors can be fitted to trucks without counting towards the width and length measurements.

They include front- and kerb-view mirrors to see better around the front-left corner of the vehicle; external parts of camera monitor systems for improved indirect vision; blindspot sensors, and cross-view mirrors to see in front of bonneted vehicles.

The overall width limit for buses and trailers won't change, but they'll

benefit from more safety devices being excluded from width and length measurements.

Though the rule changes will allow manufacturers to design and supply these safer trucks in Australia, operators should continue to engage with their registration authority to determine whether road access permits are required, says Brown.

"This Safer Freight Vehicles package responds to direct calls from industry to increase the width limit of trucks and follows extensive public consultation and feedback."

She says the changes will be a game-changer for industry, businesses and other road users.

"Our truckies play a vital role in the Australian economy and our day-to-day lives, ensuring we can access the food, medicines and other goods we need."

Meanwhile, the Electric Vehicle Council (EVC) sees sense in the changes but would welcome more.

The EV industry has been calling for the change for several years, says Electric Vehicle Council (EVC) chief executive **Behyad Jafari.**

"Increasing the width limit of trucks brings Australia in line with major overseas markets, like the EU, which is vital if we want to increase the supply of electric trucks on our roads.

"Being out of step with international regulation has restricted the supply of electric trucks into Australia. Aligning these standards will make it simpler and cheaper for Australian operators to access electric trucks, while also improving productivity, freight



efficiency and safety."

Jafari says Australia depends on trucks to deliver goods, meaning they make up around one-fifth of the country's transport emissions.

"Having more electric trucks crossing the country will reduce transport emissions, improve air quality, cut the cost of freight and reduce operating costs for owners as we decrease our reliance on expensive, imported fuel.

"As the adoption of electric trucks accelerates around the world, it's vital that Australia stops falling behind.

"Increasing the width limit is a great first step, but we need to keep the momentum going to support (the) electrification of trucks."

The EVC encourages the federal government to introduce a mass concession (one tonne minimum) for electric trucks, and to make it cheaper and attractive for Australian businesses wanting to embrace electric technology.

"More broadly, we need a National Electric Heavy Vehicle Strategy that outlines a plan to decarbonise our heavy vehicle fleet over the long haul."



AUTOBARN WAX ON SHOW OFF RETURNS FOR 2023

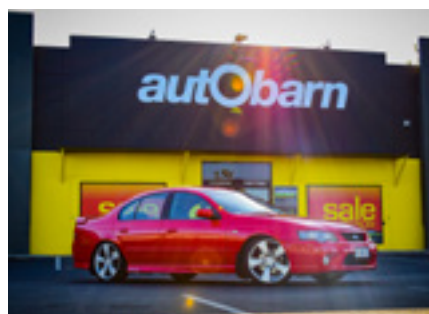
Autobarn is hosting a national show 'n' shine event, the Autobarn Wax On Show Off competition, for the second time during October and November.

The second edition of this competition will be conducted from October 15 to November 12. It saw many thousands of motorists participate nationwide last year and is set to become even bigger in 2023.

Entering is simple. Motorists can just snap an image of their car or bike at any Autobarn store, then share the image on Autobarn's Facebook page via the Wax On Show Off post pinned to the top of the page.

Or they can upload the image to Instagram by using the hashtag **#waxonshowoff** during the four week competition period.

Everyone is invited to bring along a car or bike, to get in the running to win prizes. Any cars or bikes, no matter what size, shape, or model can be shown off in front of any of the 140 Autobarn stores located across the



nation for a chance to win.

By sharing their car or bike images, Australian motorists place themselves in the running to win a grand prize of \$5000 to spend in any Autobarn store across the country and there are with minor prize packs worth a minimum of \$500 each. Autobarn Gift Cards and special prize packs from top selling product suppliers will also be given away from a product prize pool worth more than \$20,000.

As was the case during last year's inaugural Autobarn Wax on Show Off competition, entries will be judged across many automotive categories.

They include Offroad Warrior, bike, ute,



Aussie, hot hatch, stance, JDM, wagon, most unique, old school/retro, Euro, muscle.

Any entrant can win the top prize, and will be selected randomly once entries close.

This competition also coincides with the Australian retailer's national Head Turning Deals advertising campaign that will generate national motorist attention.

More more information about the Autobarn Wax on Show Off competition will be on social media channels, in catalogues and at **www.autobarn.com.au** in coming weeks.



RESEARCH PROVES INDUSTRY IS GEARING UP FOR EV

Research conducted by Fifth Quadrant for the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association (AAAA) says 50% of workshops are already EV-ready or investing actively in skills and equipment for electric vehicles.

The AAAA's Australia-first 2023 Future Readiness Index research was commissioned to determine if Australian workshops are preparing effectively for upcoming market changes and to measure their stance on technological advancements.

"As an industry, we've been dealing with assumptions around our EV readiness, misunderstandings about attitudes towards EVs, and questions around what kind of regulation or oversight is needed," says AAAA government relations and advocacy director **Lesley Yates**.

"What this research shows is that a large portion of our industry's workshops, 50% in fact, are either already EV-ready (one in 10) or already investing heavily in future readiness, prioritising skills and equipment to create a safe and productive working environment.

"In fact, many of these workshops are already successfully and safely servicing and repairing EV and hybrid vehicles and have been doing so for over a decade.

"And importantly, the majority of those that aren't actively investing right now (39%) are not 'EV rejectors'.

Instead they are simply waiting until it makes more commercial sense in their specific local markets to make such investments."

Yates says that's "completely understandable given that current trend rates expect Australia's national fleet will still be comprised of 90% ICE vehicles in 2030, even if sales of EVs in 2030 reach as high as 50%.

"Together this sees 50% of our market either future-ready or actively preparing, and a further 39% open to upskilling and investing in equipment for newer models when their local market demands it.

"Overall, what we can take away from this is that when it comes to the topic of EV readiness, the majority of our workshops are tuned into whats coming and getting ready, so consumers and government can trust that automotive workshops are preparing for the future."

Yates says the research shows the Australian automotive industry is ready to be the trusted partner for EV and hybrid owners.

"We have the knowledge, the skills, the equipment, and a proven track record, and this is all only going to increase as more and more workshops invest in this area.

"Before now, no one had a sense for how much workshops were gearing up for EV, as no one had this data.

But now we do, and it proves what we've been saying – we are a

sophisticated industry, one that is highly skilled, equipped and future-focused.

"It's clear automotive technicians are the right choice when it comes to who should be servicing and repairing EVs...

"What this means is while we welcome government assistance and there are certainly areas the AAAA wants to work on with our government partners, any calls for introducing regulation on something we're already doing safely and successfully, and any pushes for members of other industries (such as electricians) to be tasked with servicing and repairing cars, are really not required.

"It also means any judgements of the auto industry as being behind the times or out of touch with what is coming is an unwarranted stereotype.

"Australia's car park is deeply varied, so it's good news also that while there is a large focus on EVs and hybrid readiness, some workshops also remain committed and focused on ICE (Internal Combustion Engine) servicing and repair, ensuring all customers can access expert servicing and repair for their car, no matter what it is.

"While EVs and hybrids are certainly increasing in their numbers in Australia, there is still a massive number of ICE vehicles in our car park and that will continue to be the case for quite some time," she says.



DIGITAL REVEAL FOR NISSAN HYPER URBAN EV

L leading up to the Japan Mobility Show, Nissan is revealing a series of all-electric concept vehicles, the first of which is the Nissan Hyper Urban.

The series, to be revealed digitally one by one leading up to the show's press day on October 25, features the word hyper to express the heightened excitement that Nissan says the vehicles aim to bring.

Each concept is represented by a symbolic character and has custom-tailored features that "add value to unique lifestyles and diverse aspirations".

The concepts are designed to help customers make a positive impact on the planet without compromising on style or fun.

Nissan says its vision for the Japan Mobility Show embodies the company's dedication to "enriching people's lives and to revolutionising the electric-vehicle (EV) landscape with transformative products and technologies".

EMPOWERING A CLEANER WORLD

Characterised by sleek and modern looks, Nissan says the Hyper Urban's design expresses the user's "discerning taste, making a bold statement while also effectively blending in with their environment".

It says the Hyper Urban would be a fully connected EV, with its V2H function providing power to the home, resulting in significant energy cost savings and

reducing strain on the power grid.

Thanks to its V2G capability, owners could contribute surplus power to the grid to support their local community and earn money in the process.

The Intelligent Charging Management System features AI that can charge vehicles and power buildings autonomously to, provide efficient management of power.

The concept applies sustainability to vehicle lifespan, making it ideal for people conscious of the long-term value of everything they own, Nissan says.

Hardware updates and regular software updates will provide a fresh ownership experience over many years.

Nissan says the interior can be refreshed with a new instrument panel that reflects the latest technologies and trends in graphic user interfaces.

Nissan says the car represents the future design and technological capabilities of its electric vehicles.

The exterior's lime yellow body paint changes chromatically depending on the angle that light hits it.

The front and rear scissor doors are designed to provide a sense of openness and character, and the sporty silhouette "produces aerodynamic excellence for increased efficiency". Wide tires complete the sporty look.

The interior is designed to blend in with urban living spaces says Nissan. Inspired by kaleidoscopic triangles, the instrument panel and display can be



customised according to the owner's mood.

And the front seats can collapse and fold into the back seats, creating a sofa-like, private relaxing space.



SUBARU BOOST GEAR CROSSTREK

UNIQUE CROSSTREK AND BRZ TS UNVEILED

Subaru Australia used the annual national Subaru owners festival (Subinats) at Sydney Motorsport Park on September 30 to reveal two new models.

One was the Subaru Boost Gear Crosstrek concept which has off-road focused enhancements and accessories to extend its all-wheel drive capability.

And Subaru unveiled a prototype of the performance-focused STI-tuned BRZ tS that will join its line-up in 2024.

BOOST GEAR CROSSTREK

For the Boost Gear Crosstrek concept, the Subaru development team created a new range of items based on customer feedback.

The concept vehicle features all terrain tyres and a suspension lift kit to enhance its off-road ability.

Aesthetically, it gets a distinctive matte wrap and, bonnet decal, front and rear underguard, and durable, scratch-resistant paint on selected external surfaces.

Off-road wheels, rally-style mudflaps, and additional foglights add to its appearance which gets Subaru Boost Gear Crosstrek concept turquoise accents.

A major focus has been placed on functionality for users. Equipment includes alloy side steps, a rubber bonnet protector and rubber light protector that can carry bikes or skis, side cladding that transforms into a tool holder, and a magnetic rear-quarter holder for tools or phones. Wide front fenders project a more



SUBARU PROTOTYPE BRZ tS

rugged appearance and a built-in bar can hold an action camera.

Additional features include a shade awning and storage platform by Rhino-Rack fitted with an LED lightbar for outdoor activities. LED lights are mounted in the radiator grille.

"We know our owners like to explore the outdoors thanks to the benefits of Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive and this concept is a way we can extend their use of their vehicle even further," says Subaru Australia managing director **Blair Read**.

"We're sharing the Subaru Boost Gear Crosstrek concept with our owners as we look at extending our offerings in this space.

BRZ tS

Like other BRZ coupes, the tS uses the the lightweight, rear-wheel drive platform and has precision-tuned suspension and quick-ratio steering.

Subaru's EyeSight safety technology will also be introduced to manual transmission BRZ models for the first

time in 2024.

Exclusive to the BRZ tS are:

- STI tuned suspension.
- Front and rear Brembo brakes.
- Unique 18-inch dark grey metallic alloy wheels.
- Front and rear tS badging.
- Red BRZ logos in the headlights.
- Crystal black door mirrors and shark fin radio antenna.
- Bordeaux and black ultrasuede and leather-accented interior with STI embossed front seats.
- STI red push-start button.
- Instrument cluster with STI logo and bordeaux highlights.

"The BRZ is a fantastic all-round package and the Subaru engineers have now gone one step further with the tS variants handling, performance and design," Read says.

More information on the availability and pricing of the 2024 BRZ tS will be announced soon.

FORD PLUG-IN HYBRID RANGER 4X4 HERE 2025

Ford will introduce a Ranger 4x4 plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) in early 2025 marking a step forward in its plans to offer more powertrain options in the mid-sized pick-up segment.

Ford Australia says the Ranger PHEV will have more torque than any other Ranger, thanks to a 2.3-litre Ford EcoBoost turbo petrol engine paired with an electric motor and rechargeable battery system.

Its pure electric range of more than 45 kilometres will be extremely useful for Australian Ranger customers, with more than half travelling 40km or less a day, says Ford.

"The Ranger Plug-in Hybrid is a best-of-both-worlds solution for work, play, and family, offering customers zero-tailpipe emissions EV driving for short trips, or on- or off-road hybrid performance," says Ford Australia and New Zealand president **Andrew Birkic**.

"(It) will bring all of the towing and payload capability our Australian customers expect and with Pro Power Onboard for the first time yet, owners



will also have access to onboard power for both work and play."

The targeted maximum braked towing capacity of the Ranger Plug-In Hybrid is 3500kg, the same as the rest of the Ranger line-up.

Pro Power Onboard will enable customers to plug in their tools and appliances to the power outlets embedded in both the cargo bed and the cabin.

That means generators can be left at

home, leaving more space in the cargo bed for other gear.

Ford says the Ranger PHEV's EV drive modes will give customers more flexibility in deciding how and when to use EV battery power.

The PHEV is four-wheel drive, with selectable drive modes and advanced driver safety and driver assist features.



ABARTH 500E ARRIVAL AND PRICES CONFIRMED

Abarth Australia says the fully electric Abarth 500e will arrive in Australia late 2023 with the limited edition Scorpionissima trim priced at \$60,500 plus on-road costs.

This will be followed in 2024, with a Turismo trim priced at \$58,900 plus ORCs.

The Abarth 500e is available only in two new exterior colours: Acid Green and Poison Blue, and rides on new-design 18-inch diamond-cut titanium grey alloy wheels.

Inside the sport seats with integrated headrest bring the Acid-Green Scorpion – lasered on to the Alcantara upholstery – inside the cabin and Acid Green and Poison Blue double stitching to the seats to the door panels.

Abarth decals are applied to the

side profile of the vehicle (Acid Green paired with black Abarth decals, and Poison Blue paired with white decals).

When the Abarth 500e Turismo arrives, customers can choose among five colours: Antidote White, Venom Black, Adrenaline Red, Acid Green and Poison Blue.

The Abarth 500e is equipped with a 42kWh battery coupled with a powerful e-motor. The electric architecture has an improved weight distribution, better torque and a wider wheelbase, creating an Abarth that's said to be more responsive, faster and more enjoyable than its petrol-powered counterpart.

With a battery range up to 252km, and fast charging of up to 85kw in direct current (DC), it takes five



minutes to build enough power for daily requirements (around 40km) and the fast charge reaches 80% of the range in 35 minutes.

Abarth's signature and unmistakable roar is produced by an Abarth Sound Generator.





RECORD SEPTEMBER FOR NEW VEHICLE SALES

The underlying strength of the new vehicle market continued during September with 110,702 sales recorded, an increase of 18.3% on the corresponding period in 2022 and a new record for the month.

The Toyota **HiLux** was the top selling vehicle in September 2023 recording 5776 sales. It was followed by the Ford **Ranger** (5429), Tesla **Model Y** (3811), Isuzu **Ute D-Max** (2885), and Toyota **RAV4** (2798).

FAI chief executive Tony **Weber** says almost 900,000 new sales had been achieved so far this year and four of the past five months had seen record sales.

"The record result shows that Australian car buyers value a broad choice of vehicles in a range of price brackets that suit the family or business budget," Weber says.

"Consumers have a choice of vehicles across 20 light vehicle segments – from small passenger cars through to larger utes – confirming Australia's position as one of the most open and competitive new vehicle markets in the world.

"Our advice is that the supply of

vehicles into Australia, including electric vehicles, continues to improve so those consumers who want to buy a new vehicle should visit a dealer," he says.

SUVs and light commercial vehicles made up 79.4% of sales with passenger vehicles making up 16.8%.

Battery electric vehicles accounted for 8% of sales while electrified vehicles (battery electric, hybrid, and plug-in hybrid) recorded 18.3%.

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

Sales in the Australian Capital Territory were 20.6% (1806); New South Wales 24.3% (35,968); Queensland 13.5%(23,415); South Australia 11.2% (6676); Tasmania 21.0% (1972); Victoria 16% (29,426); Western Australia 22.4% (10,577), and Northern Territory 3.6% (862).

Toyota was the highest selling marque with 20,912 sales. **Mazda** followed with 8031 then Ford (8015), **Kia** (7303), and **Hyundai** (6217).

TOP 10 BRANDS



1. TOYOTA 20,912



2. MAZDA 8031



3. FORD 8015



4. KIA 7303



5. HYUNDAI 6217

4X4 UTES



1. Ford Ranger
5124



2. Toyota HiLux
4730



3. Isuzu Ute D-Max
2339



4. Toyota Landcruiser
1209



5. Mazda BT-50
933



6. Mitsubishi Triton
799



7. Volkswagen Amarok
799



8. LDV T60/T60 MAX
702



9. Nissan Navara
694



10. GWM Ute
624

SUV SMALL <\$45K



1. MG ZS
2528



2. Hyundai Kona
1218



3. Mazda CX-30
1205



4. Mitsubishi ASX
1167



5. Subaru Crosstrek
1134



6. GWM Haval Jolion
974



7. Kia Seltos
936



8. Volkswagen T-Roc
900



9. Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross
781



10. Nissan Qashqai
691

TOP 10 BRANDS



6. MITSUBISHI 5761



7. MG 5400



8. TESLA 5177



9. NISSAN 4784



10. SUBARU 4032



EVS SURGE IN SEPTEMBER SALES

Tesla's **Model Y** was Australia's third-placed top selling new vehicle, accounting for 3811 September sales.

It was behind the top selling Toyota HiLux (5776 sales) and the second-placed Ford Ranger (5429), both of which were in the top 10. VFACTS new vehicle sales data released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) shows.

Battery electric vehicles (BEVs) like the Tesla **Model Y** accounted for 8.0% of sales while electrified vehicles (battery electric, hybrid, and plug-in hybrid) recorded 18.3%.

They formed part of the new vehicle market which had a record September with 110,702 sales, an 18.3% increase on the corresponding period of 2022, the FCAI says.

FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber** says almost 900,000 new sales had been achieved so far this year and four of the past five months had record sales.

Total electric sales were 8821 units in September, up 21.7% on the same month last year when 7247 new electric vehicles were sold.

Year-to-date (YTD) figures show 65,743 total electric sales, a 202% increase compared with 21,771 new electric sales for the same period in 2022.

Hybrids also jumped in monthly and YTD comparisons, up 119.5% (from 4618 to 10,138) and 17.5% (from 59,341 to 69,731) respectively.

Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs)

also went up, by 140.8% (from 525 to 1264 in September comparisons) and 47.1% YTD (from 4584 to 6743).

Petrol and diesel new vehicles generally had slight increases, reaching 52,619 and 33,614 September sales respectively. In the passenger segment, electrics rose 43.5% (from 1891 to 2714) in September comparisons and 82.7% YTD (from 11,311 to 20,670).

Hybrids increased 86.6% in September (from 1628 to 3038) and dropped 1.5% YTD (from 20,323 to 20,021), while PHEVs went up 26.8% (from 41 to 52) in September comparisons and 3.1% YTD (from 322 to 332).

The popular SUV category saw electrics climb 13.8% in month comparisons (from 5351 to 6090) and 331.2% YTD

(from 10,421 to 44,933).

Hybrids rocketed 137.5% in September comparisons (from 2990 to 7100) and 27.4% YTD (from 39,018 to 49,710), and PHEVs jumped 150.4% (from 484 to 1212) and 50.4% (from 4262 to 6411) respectively.

More electrics are hitting the light commercial vehicle sector, recording a 240% rise (from five to 17) in September comparisons and 259% YTD (from 39 to 140).

That's still way behind diesel's 20,974 September sales and 174,976 YTD figures which had marginal rises and declines respectively but suggests that more EV models are becoming available in that (and other) categories.

ELECTRIC, PHEV AND HYBRID SALES					AUGUST 2023			
Total Market	Month		YTD		Variance +/- Vol. & %			
	2023	2022	2023	2022	MTH	YTD	MTH	YTD
ELECTRIC								
Passenger Private	1,991	2,668	17,956	9,420	-677	8,536	-25.4%	90.6%
SUV Private	4,967	1,558	38,843	5,070	3,409	33,773	218.8%	666.1%
Light Commercial Non-Private	26	9	123	34	17	89	188.9%	261.8%
Sub Total	6,984	4,235	56,922	14,524	2,749	42,398	64.9%	291.9%
HYBRID								
Passenger Private	3,924	2,262	16,983	18,695	1,662	-1,712	73.5%	-9.2%
SUV Private	7,660	4,604	42,610	36,028	3,056	6,582	66.4%	18.3%
Sub Total	11,584	6,866	59,593	54,723	4,718	4,870	68.7%	8.9%
PHEV								
Passenger Private	46	43	280	281	3	-1	7.0%	-0.4%
SUV Private	1,067	497	5,199	3,778	570	1,421	114.7%	37.6%
Sub Total	1,113	540	5,479	4,059	573	1,420	106.1%	35.0%
TOTAL	19,681	11,641	121,994	69,247	8,040	52,747	69.1%	76.2%