

From China with love

Kia EV5 program has seen no stone left unturned in order to succeed in Australia



EV5 prototype

By MATT CAMPBELL

KIA Australia is gearing up to launch what could be its most important passenger car in recent memory, the EV5 electric SUV.

The all-new model is similar in size to the Sportage SUV and will play in the same segment but with a fully electric powertrain and a very different approach to its production and engineering process compared with its sister model.

Primarily this is because the EV5 has been developed in China, where it will be built, instead of South Korea. It will also make use of Chinese electric vehicle specialist BYD's battery technology.

But just because the program is coming from a new source does not mean that Kia Australia has not had its hands all over the project.

In fact, according to Kia Australia chief ride and handling engineer Graeme Gambold, the new product might be the best-suited vehicle for

our needs, because of the level of attention and importance it has for the brand more broadly.

“The commitment from Kia and this particular model is huge,” he said.

“As you know it is going to be manufactured in China, in southern China. But on top of that, there is a new R&D centre that Kia has built in Yantai in China, across from Seoul,” he said.

“And that is a whole proving ground that is basically a copy and paste of

Namyang. It has all its own engineers, a proving ground all ticked off by Albert Biermann (executive technical advisor and former R&D head), and correlation between the two.

“So, the technical capacity of that research centre is the same as Namyang, except it is only for – at the moment – for us, it is only for EV5,” said Mr Gambold, who is leading the Australia-specific ride and handling tune for the electric SUV.

Continued next page



Graeme Gambold

DRIVEN: RHD F-150 LIGHTNING



IN THE METAL: POLESTAR 4



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Continued from previous page
 “We had a red-carpet experience when we went up there because we were the only client. Whereas in Namyang, there are so many global models being made, we squeeze into the workshop, work on ours, and it is ‘see you later’ sort of thing.

“But everything was there for us. They just opened doors to everything, helped us out, worked together, and we made the car as good as we thought we needed it to be, or as good as we could.

“Absolute total support – unique parts rushed into production – and we have never seen a commitment to the model program like that.

“That is probably where the world’s going in terms of everybody committing big programs to EVs, but it is our first experience to have such a level of attention to a project of ours,” he admitted.

“And then after we did all our ride and handling both up there and back here, engineers still kept coming out from China and only just finished,



checking things like calibrating the ADAS stuff to our roads, road signs and our conditions.”

The brand has also done extensive testing on the car with local charging infrastructure across the ACT and in New South Wales, not to mention tailoring any software solutions for the Kia Connect data system.

“The commitment from the Chinese has been huge,” said Mr Gambold.

“I thought they might be a little bit short (on) some of the technology, but the vehicle dynamics knowledge and expertise is cutting edge.

“There is no associated quality downturn. In actual fact, I think that this car is better for the fact that it is made out of China and it has got all this extra attention (as opposed to a Korean-made) normal product.”

Mr Gambold pointed out that, having worked with different types of battery chemistry in other programs – EV6 and EV9, for instance, which run lithium-ion NMC batteries that are lighter but potentially less durable long term – he found the difference with the new EV5 noticeable.

That is because the EV5 uses BYD Blade batteries, using LFP (lithium iron-phosphate) chemistry, which is more affordable and potentially more durable when it comes to repeatedly charging to full capacity.

“There are pros and cons. It lowers the cost, increases the weight, but it



improves the charging situation – full charge it all the time, and it is a little bit safer.

“It is not an inferior technology at all, even though it is about keeping the cost down, it is seen as, possibly, that. But it is not at all.”

The EV5 range is set to kick off

below \$60,000, according to Kia Australia, which would mean it would “undercut the Model Y” from Tesla – a stated aim from the brand’s product planning team.

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Polestar 4 in the metal



We take a look at coupe-style Polestar 4 before it enters hot \$80-\$100K BEV market in August

By PETER BARNWELL

POLESTAR confirmed the previously estimated price of its incoming Polestar 4 coupe SUV at a recent press reveal in Sydney, the sexy five-seater starting from \$81,500 for the single motor variant with the dual motor pitched from \$93,050 – both excluding on-road costs.

Its arrival in August follows the slightly larger Polestar 3 SUV that is scheduled to lob Down Under in July; both newbies joining the Polestar 2 that has been here for a



few years.

At the Polestar design studio in Gothenburg, the vision was to create a “new kind of immersive rear occupant experience” in the sleek coupe-SUV as well as enhanced aerodynamics that would yield the fastest model in Polestar’s stable to date – with the lowest coefficient of drag.

Polestar’s British-based global head of design and innovation PR Graeme Lambert said deleting the rear window on the 4 helped achieve an “interesting, arresting design



with slippery coupe aerodynamics facilitated by a lower nose thanks to the lack of an engine”.

“We were able to position the rear header rail behind the second seat row for gains in rear seat headroom and to provide a glass roof over the heads of all passengers avoiding a pillar box rear view associated with more traditional coupe designs,” he said.

“There’s no real point in having a rear window as technology is so good these days.

“We were able to create a more interesting overall design with a cocoon effect a bit like you’d find

in business class. It is a spectacular piece of design.”

Viewing it in the metal on Australian soil for the first time, the Polestar 4 clearly owes much of its appearance to the Polestar Precept concept, particularly in areas such as the dual blade headlights and the adoption of a “unique” lighting signature backlighting the Polestar emblem.

Other Precept cues include the low frontal mask, retractable door handles, flush daylight opening with frameless door glass, rear aero blades, and a rear light bar.

Striking to look at in the metal,



Graeme Lambert



BEV-CURIOUS AUDI S3 OWNER JOINS US FOR POLESTAR 2 TEST: [CLICK HERE](#)

particularly in Pearl White, the 4 is based on the Geely-developed Sustainable Experience Architecture (SEA) platform and measures 4840mm in length, 2139mm in width, and 1534mm in height while riding on a 2999mm wheelbase.

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Niro faces axe

Overpriced Niro electric SUV could be axed when EV5 arrives, says Kia Australia brass

By MATT CAMPBELL

KIA Australia is about to launch a new electric SUV that will be bigger, more affordable and better equipped than battery electric variants of the Niro, meaning the small segment crossover could soon be discontinued in this market.

At a preview event for the new Kia EV5 – a Chinese-built mid-size SUV that could start at less than \$60,000 when it arrives here in June – the brand’s senior executives confirmed that the launch of this mainstream model could see the end of the road for the Niro EV.

The Niro is made in South Korea, and because of Australia’s place on the pecking order of factory supply, it has been rather uncompetitive in its pricing for this market.

Priced from \$66,590 before on-

road costs for the sparsely equipped base model S and rising to \$72,360 + ORC for the flagship GT-Line, the Niro struggles to compete against some desirable rivals.



Damien Meredith

In the past, Kia Australia CEO Damien Meredith has stood by the pricing and positioning of the Niro EV, stating it was “doing its job” for the brand in Australia but he now admits that the potential for the EV5, especially with fleet buyers, is something that cannot be underestimated.

“I think Niro has done an amazing job to be honest, but whether or not it is one for the future, time will tell,” he said.

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See Drive on



Kia Australia aiming for EV5 to undercut Model Y on price, sell 10,000 per year

By MATT CAMPBELL

KIA Australia is going for big numbers and low prices for its EV5 electric mid-size SUV, which will launch in Australia in June.

In fact, the brand has posited that it could price the new Sportage-sized fully electric SUV from less than \$60,000, with aims of moving up to 10,000 units per year of the Chinese-built model.

Sourcing is a significant matter because the EV5 will be the first Kia to be built in China, and it also uses Chinese competitor BYD's blade battery technology, which will be offered with Standard Range (64kWh) and Long Range (88kWh) options.

The Australian EV5 line-up will

consist of the entry-level Air and Earth grades due in the middle of 2024, followed by a range-topping GT-Line expected in the fourth quarter.

Front-wheel drive is the basis for the powertrain, with a 160kW motor offered and all-wheel drive also available which ups output to 230kW. Full details are still to be confirmed.

Kia Australia chief operating officer Dennis Piccoli has high hopes for what he describes as the brand's first 'mainstream' battery electric vehicle offering.

"It is our first mainstream player. It is in that segment – medium SUV – that is the biggest segment of the market," he said at a local media preview for the EV5.



Dennis Piccoli

"That is a growing segment, EV sales have really started to grow there.

"So, it is a pivotal point for us. This is where we are really starting to get serious with the EV product that we think will resonate in the market given the configuration we have put together.

"We think it will go well in that private space, as well as in the fleet world."

Fleet is going to be a big focus for the EV5, which the brand is aiming to offer with a five-star ANCAP rating and fitting all the tech and equipment required to get high safety scores for all variants in the line-up.



Roland Rivero

"I think there is certainly government and corporates that definitely are looking to go green," added Mr Piccoli.

"And so, there is a lot of chatter out there – there is certainly some latent demand – particularly since we have a pretty solid distribution network around the country. I think it should hit the ground pretty well.

"Volume-wise, we think in time, we will get it up to around 10,000 per year. That is the current thinking, all going well.

"It is a very important product for us moving forward."

In the first two months of 2024, the

targeted Tesla Model Y accounted for 2456 deliveries, well and truly on target to eclipse 10,000 sales for the calendar year; in 2023 it got close to 29,000 or almost double the Kia Sportage's tally of 15,747 units.

Kia Australia general manager of product planning Roland Rivero said the car will be highly competitive in its segment, and that the brand wants to undercut the Tesla Model Y as a point of strength in the segment.

"It is important to achieve the sales plan, that it is pretty competitive, (and) offers good value," he explained.

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Lightning fantastic

We jump into AUSEV's RHD Ford F-150 Lightning for an electrifying first drive

By COBEY BARTELS

AUSEV was kind enough, or brave enough, to throw *GoAuto* the keys to a right-hand drive F-150 Lightning prototype for an on-road test drive around Brisbane.

It was a brief 25-minute drive, but

it gave us a tantalising first taste of the battery-electric vehicles (BEV) that Australians are likely to covet in future – and right now, this is the only right-hand drive electric 4x4 ute available.

While Ford Australia decided to

bring the wildly popular F-150 here, the all-electric Lightning model has not made its Down Under yet – at least not from a Ford dealer.

That problem has been solved by Australian-owned distributor, AUSEV, which offers a range

of commercial BEVs with end-to-end solutions covering vehicles, charging, servicing and fleet management.

No stranger to remanufacturing vehicles for the Australian market, AUSEV has a long history of

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importing and remanufacturing internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles, but now it has set its sights firmly on BEVs with distribution deals for both the consumer and fleet markets.

GoAuto drove one of AUSEV's F-150 Lightning models equipped with Method Race wheels and Maxxis RAZR off-road tyres, an example that has so far been used for testing and validation locally.

Other than an extremely high-quality

right-hand-drive conversion, which aimed to change as little as possible, the F-150 Lightning retains all of the safety features and functionality of the



North American model except for the fact it can be registered and driven on Australian roads.

The F-150 Lightning uses dual electric motors providing permanent four-wheel drive and combined outputs of 432kW/1050Nm. The long-range version we tested has the larger 131kWh battery that is claimed to provide up to 510km of driving between top-ups.

[DRIVE IMPRESSIONS: CLICK HERE](#)



Tonic for Stonic

Kia Stonic small SUV to go all-turbo and score improved safety technologies soon

By MATT CAMPBELL

KIA Australia has confirmed the MY25 Stonic small SUV will go all-turbo, with a range of new safety technology and convenience features expected to cause pricing to jump up a level within the cost-sensitive segment.

The current Stonic starts at \$22,290 plus on-road costs for the base model S 1.4-litre petrol manual, adding \$1500 for the six-speed auto, while the 1.4-litre manual Sport grade lists

from \$25,290 + ORC (add \$1500 for auto), and the range-topping GT-Line is \$30,790 + ORC.

Aside from spec and trim changes, the main difference between the lower grades and the flagship is the fitment of a downsized 1.0-litre three-cylinder turbo-petrol engine that will soon be rolled out across the Stonic line-up due to the global axing of Kia's 1.4-litre unit.

Kia Australia general manager of product planning Roland Rivero confirmed that the brand will continue to offer three grades in the revised Stonic line-up, all of them turbocharged and with the seven-speed dual-clutch transmission as standard.



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BEV ute nudge – page 10



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Bargain



HS

MG Motor cuts up to \$6000 from core models, including MG3, ZS, and HS

By MATT BROGAN

MG MOTOR Australia has cut the pricing of several core models in a bid to shift older MY22 and MY23 stock.

Offering discounts of between \$1000 and \$6000 on MG3, ZST, HS and HS Plus EV models, the announcement comes just weeks after the Chinese importer decided to move its entire EV range to national drive-away pricing.

MG3 light hatchbacks are now available from \$18,990 drive-away, while the ZS small SUV



MG3

range is available from \$22,990 drive-away. The HS medium SUV range now begins at \$29,990 drive-away, while the HS Plus EV (plug-in hybrid) range is offered from \$43,690 drive-away, including metallic paint.

MG Motor Australia chief executive officer Peter Ciao said the value of the latest discounts will assist Australian buyers facing cost-of-living pressures.

“MG is putting customers first by ensuring everyone can access a wide range of affordable vehicles thanks to reduced nationwide drive-away pricing on our most popular models,” he said.

“Whenever we can pass price reductions like this onto our customers, we will make sure we do.”

FULL STORY, PRICING: [CLICK HERE](#)

PRICE CUT MAKES GWM ORA MOST-AFFORDABLE BEV

By PETER BARNWELL

GWM’s latest Ora price reduction, to a starting point from \$35,990 drive-away, comes only a few months after the Chinese car-maker carved thousands off the price of its small electric hatch.

This makes the base model a sub-\$30K proposition in Queensland after state incentives but looks like bad news for existing Ora owners who likely wear a big reduction in retained value, especially those who paid the original launch price of \$44,490 drive-away.

In what ostensibly amounts to a “2023 plate clearance”, the cheaper

Ora follows a recently announced new price schedule for GWM’s “discounted, drive away” local line-up and means the previously significant differential in price between BEV and ICE powered models is shrinking.



FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

SKODA’S KODIAQ OFFER



By MATT BROGAN

SKODA is now offering its Kodiaq large SUV in mid-spec Sportline trim for the same national drive-away price of \$56,490 as the existing Style base model – a saving of more than \$5000 – as the importer prepares for a new-generation model.

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Alpha mail



GWM to launch bigger Cannon Alpha ute in mid-2024 with hybrid and diesel options

By MATT BROGAN

GWM is set to grow its Aussie product portfolio even further from mid-2024 when it launches the Cannon Alpha utility into local showrooms with a choice of petrol-electric hybrid or turbo-diesel drivelines, likely becoming the first genuine hybrid ute (as opposed to 48V mild hybrid assistance) on mainstream sale in Australia.

The Cannon Alpha will be GWM's largest vehicle offering to date, with exterior dimensions straddling the

one-tonne dual-cab ute category and the likes of Ford's F-150 with a footprint similar to that of a Jeep Gladiator or SsangYong Musso with extended tub option.

GWM says the addition of the Cannon Alpha will strengthen its new energy vehicle (NEV) strategy, the model becoming its fifth model with a hybrid option after the Jolion, H6, Tank 300 and Tank 500. GWM has also established the all-electric Ora range in Australia.

The dual-cab Cannon Alpha is said



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to offer a “strong combination of premium design, excellent on- and off-road performance, and intelligent technology”. Full specifications and pricing are expected to be announced closer to the model's local launch.

GWM says it will position the 2.0-litre four-cylinder turbocharged petrol-electric hybrid version of the Cannon Alpha as the flagship of its new ute range, with the 2.4-litre four-cylinder turbocharged diesel to carry the remainder of duties.

Power and torque figures for the hybrid are listed at 255kW/648Nm against 135kW/480Nm for the diesel, both paired to a GWM-developed nine-speed automatic transmission.

Braked towing capacity for both powertrain options is listed at a class-competitive 3500kg.

In further keeping the model in step with rivals such as the Ford Ranger and Toyota HiLux, the Cannon Alpha features three all-terrain driving modes plus front and

rear locking differentials. Low- and high-range duties are handled by a Borg Warner-sourced transfer case.

Uniquely, the Cannon Alpha features a 60:40 split-fold tailgate. The design offers both side- and bottom hinges to allow the loading of odd-shaped items, activated by the press of a button. The tailgate is further assisted by a standard soft-open feature.

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Artist's impression

NVES changes may see Kia fast track electric ute but more homework needed

By MATT CAMPBELL

KIA Australia may accelerate its program to get an electric ute on sale in light of market changes and legislative adjustments such as the New Vehicle Emissions Standard (NVES).

The brand had previously said that it would offer a diesel ute at first – which is still about 12 months away – followed by a fully electric take on the new model that is all but confirmed to be named Tasman.

But with the NVES playing on the minds of all OEMs as it enters Parliament and the market shifting towards more electric and electrified

utes coming to market sooner than the previously expected timeline, Kia Australia CEO Damien Meredith admits that the program may need to be rethought to accelerate the arrival of the brand's electric ute.

“Well, nothing is off the table,” he said when asked if the NVES and market forces could push the brand to bring the battery electric ute earlier than forecast.

“Nothing, nothing whatsoever is off the table.”

Speaking on the current electric vehicle environment, and the push to include more battery electric vehicles (BEV) in the Kia line-up – including the EV5, a midsize SUV with an expected sub-\$60,000 price point – Mr Meredith said the brand is always keeping an eye on the situation and will plan accordingly.



EV5 prototype

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Five Retailer of the Year winners chosen from pool of 35 Australian Peugeot dealers

By PETER BARNWELL
PEUGEOT Australia picked Brisbane City Peugeot, Parramatta Peugeot, Bayside European Peugeot (Melbourne), Perth City Peugeot and Allan Mackay Peugeot (Moss Vale NSW) as the highest achievers for 2023 among its national network of 35 retailers.

At a recent function in Sydney the five 2023 Peugeot Retailer of the Year winners were announced, respectively topping the categories of Northern Region, Eastern Region, Southern Region, South West Region and National Rural Dealer.

Stellantis-owned Peugeot, a player in the Australian market for decades and represented here by Inchcape since 2017, boasts a loyal following and is embarking on a big new model year in 2024 with the dealership

network gearing up in expectation. New models arriving this year include the E-3008, E-208, E-308 battery electric vehicles.

Commenting at the awards ceremony, Peugeot Australia managing director Kate Gillis said the national Retailer of the Year awards recognise “outstanding achievements, passion for the Peugeot brand and commitment to delivering exceptional customer experiences”.

“The retailers in our national network are valued partners in bringing the Peugeot brand and its electrification journey to Australian consumers and we congratulate those who have achieved exceptional results throughout 2023,” said Ms Gillis.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

CUPRA CANBERRA NAMED 2023 GARAGE OF THE YEAR

By PETER BARNWELL
RECENT new car entrant Down Under and Spanish VW Group brand Cupra has celebrated its growing network with concurrent presentation of its 2023 awards for Garage of the Year and Specialist of the Year.



Cupra Canberra

Award-winners assessed as among the brand’s highest performers encompassed nine Cupra Australia locations and 28 individual ‘specialists’ who vied for the top spot.

Taking the 2023 chocolates was Cupra Canberra which claimed the overall award for Garage of the

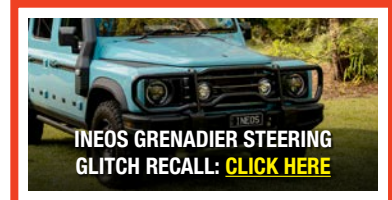
Year as well as topping the Single Site category. Multi Site winner was Cupra Artamon (NSW).

Anthony Matteo of Cupra Perth was awarded Specialist of the Year for his passion, knowledge and commitment.

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FIRE RISK PROMPTS JAGUAR I-PACE RECALL: [CLICK HERE](#)



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Ute battle intensifies



Ford Ranger

Sales records broken as Ranger gains lead on HiLux, March sales nudge the 110K mark

By PHILIP LORD

MARCH was yet another record-breaking month for new-vehicle sales in Australia, the 109,647 volume figure beating the best previous record achieved in March 2018, when 106,988 units were sold.

It is also the ninth month of the past 12 that has achieved an Australian new-vehicle monthly sales record.

For year-to-date January to March, the 304,452 sales figure is also a record for first quarter Australian new vehicle sales volume and represents an increase of 13.2 per cent on last year's result.

Electrified powertrains (hybrid, plug-in hybrid and battery electric)

grew to represent almost one in four of all new vehicles sold while SUVs continued as the dominant body style, representing more than half of the new-vehicle market.

“This is a terrific result for the sector however, all car brands are well aware that these results cannot be taken for granted,” said FCAI chief executive Tony Weber.

“We need to factor in the ongoing cost of living pressures and the challenges for industry and consumers that will emerge with the introduction of the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard (NVES) in less than nine months.”

For the month of March, Toyota

VFACTS WRAP

TOP 10 BRANDS MARCH 2024

Pos	Brand	Sales	% Share
1	Toyota	18,961	17.3
2	Ford	8776	8.0
3	Mazda	8246	7.5
4	Mitsubishi	7866	7.2
5	Kia	7070	6.4
6	Tesla	6017	5.5
7	Hyundai	5985	5.5
8	Nissan	4976	4.5
9	Isuzu Ute	4351	4.0
10	MG	3949	3.6

Source: VFACTS

remains the top-selling brand, with 18,961 units (17.3 per cent market share), followed by Ford with 8776 sales (8.0 per cent share) shunting Mazda from its long-held second position to third with 8246 units (7.5 per cent share).

As expected, Toyota also has a

clear dominance in year-to-date, with 56,238 units sold (18.5 per cent market share) followed by Mazda with 23,761 sales (7.8 per cent share) still just ahead of Ford with 22,675 sales (7.4 per cent share).

Rounding off the top 10 most popular marques YTD, Mitsubishi came fourth with 20,188 sales (6.6 per cent share), then Kia (18,918 units, 6.2 per cent share), Hyundai (17,850 sales, 5.9 per cent share), Nissan (14,293 units, 4.7 per cent).

Of the top 10 marques, Toyota showed the largest year to date increase with a 37.4 per cent improvement, followed by Tesla with 22.9 per cent and Mitsubishi with 21.3 per cent higher volume than 2023 YTD.

The biggest sellers were SUVs, with 64,631 units (58.9 per cent total market share), up from 53,526 last year (55.0 per cent market share), while the passenger segment was also slightly up in volume (17,611

versus 17,182) but down in market share from 17.7 per cent in March 2023 to 16.1 per cent last month.

The light commercial segment increased 1049 to 23,061 units but the segment's share of the total market fell to 21.0 per cent from 22.6 per cent compared to March 2023. Heavy commercial sales and share were both down, from 4531 (4.7 per cent share) to 4344 (4.0 per cent) this year.

In year-to-date sales, SUVs also led the way with 172,234 units (up 16.3 per cent), followed by light commercials (67,427, up 13.7 per cent) and passenger (53,655, up 6.8 per cent). Heavy commercials saw a slight drop 2.0 per cent, with 11,136 sold to the end of March.

The most popular vehicle in Australia in March was again the Ford Ranger with 5661 sales, a 25.6 per cent increase on last year.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)
NZ market cools – next page

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NZ market cools



Toyota RAV4

Another slow month for NZ new-vehicle sales, down 27pc over this time last year

By PHILIP LORD

NEW Zealand sales data for March bears the grim news of continuing soft demand for new vehicles, down 27 per cent on the same month last year.

Figures released by New Zealand's Motor Industry Association show that the 11,616 March 2024 registrations represent 4381 fewer (27.4 per cent) sold than the same month last year, and 9388 units lower (44.7 per cent) than the sales achieved during March 2022.

As far as New Zealand's year-to-date new-vehicle registrations are concerned, the trend for the first quarter of the year is 10.8 per cent lower (4091 units) than the 2023 first-quarter results.

New Zealand Motor Industry Association CEO Aimee Wiley

attributes the ongoing sluggish demand in March new-vehicle registrations to the country's wider economic slowdown.

Interest rate rises to counter inflation have also eased consumer spending, Ms Wiley said.

Light passenger vehicles (including SUVs) were hardest hit compared with the same month last year, down 34.9 per cent or 4055 units, with the March 2024 total of 7571 registrations.

Taken on a YTD basis, the light passenger segment was down 20.3 per cent compared with the March quarter of 2023, and down 22.0 per cent down compared with the same period of 2022.

As for light commercial vehicles, March 2024 registrations were

NZ SALES WRAP			
TOP 10 BRANDS MARCH 2024			
Pos	Brand	Sales	% Share
1	Toyota	2391	21
2	Mitsubishi	1489	13
3	Ford	1410	12
4	Kia	969	8
5	Nissan	557	5
6	Hyundai	397	3
7	Suzuki	387	3
8	GWM	320	3
9	Honda	320	3
10	MG	307	3

Source: NZ MIA

down a relatively low 6.5 per cent (236 units), but sharply contrasts with March 2022, with 63.3 per cent fewer (5814 units) registrations than two years ago.

However, in the YTD figures, commercials are looking more healthy than last year with a 13.4

per cent rise (1210 units) over the first quarter 2023 results. The heady days of first-quarter 2022 commercial registrations appear to have evaporated; the 2024 results are 41.9 per cent down on January to March 2022.

Meanwhile, heavy commercial vehicle vehicles are down 11.8 per cent (90 units) over March 2023, but had a better showing than the same month in 2022, up 5.8 per cent or 37 units over the third month of 2022.

Headline winners of manufacturers participating in the light passenger segment in March include Toyota with 1585 units registered and 20.9 per cent segment share, Kia (969 units and 12.8 per cent segment share) and Mitsubishi (808 units and 10.7 per cent segment share).

The top three light passenger models for the month of March were the Toyota RAV4 (791 units and 10.4 per cent segment share), Kia Stonic

(327 units and 4.3 per cent segment share), just ahead of the Kia Seltos with 325 units and 4.3 per cent segment share.

The type of light passenger vehicles most favoured by buyers were SUV medium, with 2652 units registered (35.0 per cent share of light passenger), then SUV compact, 2563 units (33.9 per cent share of light passenger) and thirdly, SUV large, with 625 units (8.3 per cent share of light passenger).

Parsing the motive power registration results for light passenger show a continued cooling of battery electric vehicle registrations, not surprising given the expiry of government incentives late last year.

A total of 477 battery electric vehicles (BEV) were sold in March 2024, compared with 2629 in the same period last year.

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Tech on Patrol

Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and more in MY24 Nissan Patrol tech lift, prices up \$3K

By HAITHAM RAZAGUI and PETER BARNWELL

NISSAN’S big V8 petrol-powered Patrol off-roader may have been around for 15 years since the Y62 generation launched but upgrades announced this week bring it more in line on tech terms with competitors including arch-rival Toyota’s 3.3-litre V6 twin-turbo diesel LandCruiser 300.

Prices of Ti and Ti-L Patrol variants have edged up over the past few years, culminating in the latest schedule jumping by \$3000 to result in the Ti opening proceedings from

\$87,900 excluding on-road costs and the top Ti-L trim level cresting the \$100K mark to be listed from \$100,600 + ORC. The Patrol Warrior (by Premcar) also rises by \$3000, to \$104,160 + ORC.

Upgrades for the MY24 Patrol centre on a new media unit developed in partnership with automotive supplier Directed Technologies to equip the big fourbie with wireless connectivity for both Android Auto and Apple CarPlay smartphone mirroring systems through a fully featured 10.1-inch high-definition central touchscreen.

A 15-watt wireless smartphone charging pocket is installed in the centre console as well as USB-A and USB-C ports to ensure devices remain topped up.



FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)



Outdoorsy X-Trail

Nissan aims X-Trail N-Trek at adventurous Australian families, from \$47,290 + ORC

By MATT BROGAN

NISSAN has released details of a new addition to the 2024 X-Trail line-up, the ST-L based N-Trek variant aimed at families who are “more adventurous and daring”.

Joining the range priced from \$47,290 plus on-road costs, the Nissan X-Trail N-Trek is available in five- and seven-seat configurations and is said to bring an outdoor-inspired character to the portfolio.



The 2.5-litre petrol-powered X-Trail N-Trek is differentiated by a dark-finished grille, gunmetal-finished front and rear bumper inlays, and black mirror caps, door handles, and roof rails plus new LED fog lights set into the restyled front bumper and N-Trek-specific 18-inch alloy wheels.

Inside is water-resistant synthetic leather upholstery Nissan says reflects the “more adventurous spirit of N-Trek buyers who are likely to return to their car after sporty activities outdoors”.

The variant also offers several technology inclusions, including a 12.3-inch instrumentation screen and 12.3-inch infotainment screen, and 10.8-inch head-up display projected onto the windscreen.

FULL STORY, PRICING: [CLICK HERE](#)

PLUG-IN UTE COLLAB?

By MATT BROGAN

WHILE Mitsubishi and Nissan have remained shtum on the prospect of an electrified ute for Australia, the alliance partners are planning a next-generation utility to be assembled in Mexico with battery electric and plug-in hybrid drivetrain options on the table.

The vehicle would likely arrive as a successor to the United States and Canada market ‘D41’ Nissan Frontier and potentially, given the plan to make it in Mexico, replace the ‘D23’ Navara-based Frontier sold south of the Rio Grande.

It would also serve to expand Mitsubishi’s position in the thriving mid-size ‘truck’ market in the United States where the Triton is stymied by a 25 per cent tariff placed on light commercial vehicles imported from outside of North America.



‘D41’ Frontier

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

Dogma warning

CARLOS TAVARES
CEO, STELLANTIS

CO-CHAIR OF
THE FREEDOM OF MOBILITY FORUM
ADVISORY BOARD



Stellantis CEO questions one-size-fits-all mobility approach, says BEVs not suited to all markets

By MATT BROGAN

STELLANTIS CEO Carlos Tavares has told attendees gathered for the recent Freedom of Mobility Forum that he doubts that battery electric vehicles (BEV) are a solution that will work for consumers in all parts of the world.

He said battery technology needs to improve considerably to become lighter and to utilise new chemistries that do not require such large volumes of raw materials in their construction.

“We should move away from a dogmatic thinking where one size fits all,” he said.

“I don’t think this is going to work. What I would like to add is that the current EVs can be a solution for some of our societies.”

Mr Tavares said that electric vehicle batteries will need a “very significant

breakthrough in terms of chemistry” to cut their weight in the coming decade, and that the 450kg of raw materials currently required to create each new EV battery pack “does not look like a very reasonable outcome” from an environmental perspective.

“The industry, based on new chemistries, needs to achieve in the next decade a breakthrough in terms of power density of the cells, so that we reduce by at least 50 per cent the weight and the raw material usage of EVs – I think that’s on the way,” he explained.

Mr Tavares said that it does not make sense that the 450 additional kilograms of raw materials put into the manufacture of an electric vehicle provides a “decent” range of just 400km.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

BMW x Tata

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BMW and Tata Technologies to establish software, IT development hubs in India

By MATT BROGAN

BMW Group has signed an agreement with global product engineering and digital services company Tata Technologies to form a joint venture that aims to establish software and IT development hubs across India.

The pair say the main development and operations – focusing on strategic software development, including solutions for software-defined vehicles (SDVs) – will be established in Bangalore and Pune with the focus in Chennai on IT business solutions.

Execution of the joint venture agreement remains subject to review and approval by the relevant authorities.

According to BMW and Tata, the joint venture will embody the ethos of ‘Engineer in India for the World’

and will leverage Tata Technologies’ digital engineering expertise and talent pool to contribute to the BMW Group’s “strategic expansion of software coding capabilities across global IT hubs and 24/7 operations”.

In automotive software, the focus will be on automated driving, infotainment and digital services, while in business IT, the emphasis will be on digitalisation and automation of product development, production and sales.

From the inception of this joint venture, 100 trained and experienced Tata Technologies professionals will ensure robust and immediate contribution to software projects.

The joint venture is likely to grow quickly to a four-digit staffing number in the following years.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

SUB-€20K TWINGO BEV?

BY MATT BROGAN

RENAULT is reportedly working to create a successor to its popular Twingo ZE electric vehicle, the replacement model likely to arrive as part of a joint venture with Volkswagen as the European marques attempt to stave off intense competition from Chinese imports.

According to *Reuters*, several sources have verified the existence of the forthcoming model, a validation vehicle said to have undergone testing as recently as last week.

Slotting within Renault’s Ampere electrification unit, the Twingo is tipped to enter the market more quickly than originally anticipated, with fully-electric models being developed in as little as three years – well down from the industry average of seven.

Further accelerating the model’s production, Renault engineers are said to be working to trim the number of components used in the Twingo by up to 20 per cent, using more generic components in favour of those made specifically for the model.



Current Twingo

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

X marks the rot



Tesla reputation takes hit as Musk's online antics influence brand consideration score

By MATT BROGAN

TESLA is facing reputational damage from the “polarising persona” of CEO Elon Musk that is causing its consideration score among consumers to tumble, according to data sourced from market intelligence firm Caliber.

A recent Reuters report citing research from United States-based Caliber shows a February 2024 consideration score for Tesla of just 31 per cent – less than half of its November 2021 high of 70 per cent.

The February score marks an eight per cent fall from the month prior, indicating what Caliber refers to as strong associations between Tesla's reputation and that of Mr Musk.

“It is very likely that Musk himself is contributing to the reputational downfall (of Tesla),” said Caliber

chief executive officer Shahar Silbershatz, whose survey showed that 83 per cent of Americans connect Musk with Tesla.

Reuters spoke to several marketing, polling, and automotive industry experts who said controversies surrounding Mr Musk's increasingly far-right political stance and public statements are weighing on Tesla's brand and demand.

“It is hard enough to win sales without getting into politics,” said Northwestern University marketing professor Tim Calkins.

The report suggests that economic fears, a lack of affordable new models, recent reports of toxic waste dumping, and rising competition from cheaper rivals are also placing pressure on Tesla.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

Robotaxi 'licenced'



Campaign video shows Hyundai Ioniq 5 robotaxi passing 'driving test' in the US

By MATT BROGAN

HYUNDAI has released a campaign video showing its all-electric and self-driving Ioniq 5 robotaxi successfully completing a process similar to that



of a US driver's licence test.

Created to convey what Hyundai says is the safety and trustworthiness of the vehicle, the video features an Ioniq 5 robotaxi completing a series of public-level driving tests, including a road driving assessment in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Demonstrating what Hyundai says was “outstanding performance”, the achievement of the Ioniq 5 robotaxi is said to underscore the model's reliability, as well as the inclusivity of its autonomous vehicle technology, highlighting the potential to “safely provide freedom of mobility to all”.

In the video's opening, we find an interview with a visually impaired American woman by the name of Pearl Outlaw and her mother Ruth.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

L3 AUTONOMY UNSAFE?

By MATT BROGAN

BENTLEY CEO Adrian Hallmark has declared Level 3 autonomous driving technology as “dangerous”, saying the Volkswagen Group subsidiary will increase focus on more advanced driver assistance systems instead.

Mr Hallmark – who will take over stewardship of Aston Martin later this year – said the danger in Level 3 autonomy comes when the driver is required to take over in select situations.

“We think Level 3 is dangerous from all the testing analysis that we have done because it relied too much on recovery of attention and intervention from the driver,” he explained.

Level 3 autonomous driving technology is legally allowed to drive vehicles so equipped in Germany and some US states.

Mr Hallmark said that as a result of said analysis, Bentley will focus on providing a more sophisticated version of its Level 2 system – known as Level 2 Plus Plus – in its forthcoming fully electric car (due in 2026).



FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

GoAuto Market Insight
brought to you by Op2ma



Pricing big picture

Shifting model, variant mixes have large impact on average new-vehicle prices – but trend is up

By PHILIP LORD

WHILE the new vehicle market is booming, price fluctuations in the last 12 months have not been consistent across brands. Some models have increased in price by more than 20 per cent in the past 12 months, while others have remained unchanged and some have reduced by as much as 10 per cent.

Using automotive price transparency data collated by Melbourne-based startup The Beep, GoAuto has tracked key automotive passenger car and light commercial brands to gauge where prices have moved over the past 12 months to April 7, 2024.

The Beep provides accurate pricing for 250 models from major brands at no cost to the new-car buyer. Pricing is adjusted for each state and territory and includes specific drive-away prices for the grade of car.

GoAuto has used NSW prices, representing the largest individual state for new-vehicle volume. Prices movements should be viewed as comparative only, and even then, can be influenced by factors such as a new (typically premium) model that bumps

up the average price for a brand.

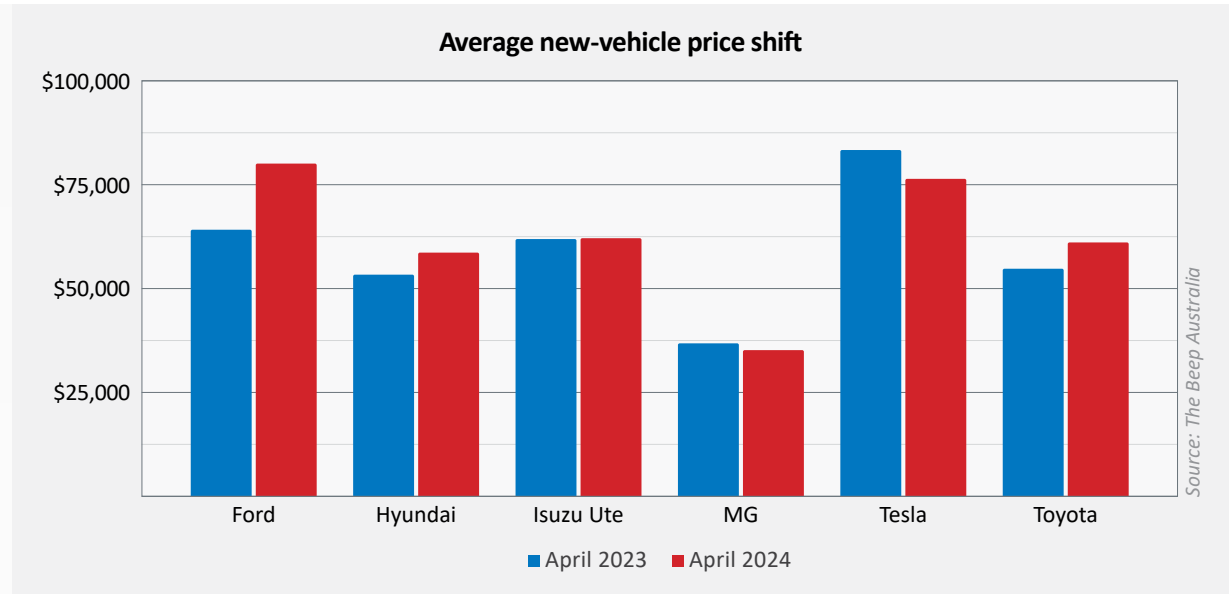
The addition or deletion of specific model grades and drivetrains also has an influence, as seen recently by Toyota’s removal of non-hybrid drivetrains from its two smallest and most-affordable vehicles.

According to data from The Beep, Ford had a significant price increase average across its range of 25.17 per cent (\$16,127) to \$80,211, with the highest single price average increase between May and June last year from \$64,370 to \$73,567.

The introduction of an expensive new model, the F-150 pick-up, had a significant influence on this average price increase, but there have also been price rises for existing models.

For example, average prices of the Mustang sportscar line-up went up 20.79 per cent, or \$14,803 across the range to \$86,010 in November 2023, the Ranger ute rose 4.13 per cent, or \$2858 to \$72,046 and the Everest large SUV increased in price by 4.24 per cent, or \$2986, to \$73,381.

The Ford Mustang Mach-E, which arrived last year as Ford’s premium battery electric vehicle, is the only model in the Blue Oval portfolio to



reduce in price, down 5.35 per cent, or \$5489, to a range average of \$95,465.

A price increase of 11.46 per cent measured across Toyota’s broad range of vehicles equates to \$6274, bringing the brand average of \$61,017.

While some Toyota models have seen minor increases, (such as less than one per cent for the Supra

sportscar) others have seen a big jump. The deletion of base petrol models in the range has put the C-HR up by 37.58 per cent, or \$14,829, with a current average of \$54,290.

The now hybrid-only Yaris (except Yaris GR) is also affected by the loss of its price-leading base model, pushing the range average up 7.33

per cent, or \$2422, to \$35,446.

What is interesting about this model, according to The Beep data, is that in runout the MY23 Yaris increased from \$28,376 drive-away on March 24 to \$32,187 drive-away on March 31.

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Petrochemical giant Shell softens 2030 carbon reduction target, scraps 'perilous' 2035 objective

By MATT BROGAN

PETROCHEMICAL giant Shell has announced it will weaken its 2030 carbon emissions reduction target and scrap its “perilous” 2035 objective, citing expectations for strong fuel demand and uncertainty in the energy transition says a report published by *Reuters*.

The retreat, which mimics that made last year by rival BP, comes in response to the slowing of emissions regulations by governments across the globe, many of which have revised climate policies and delayed emissions targets amid soaring

energy costs and supply concerns.

According to *Reuters*, major oil suppliers have also faced increased investor pressure to focus on the most profitable arms of their businesses after reporting bumper profits in recent years while returns in renewables have slumped.

The changes to Shell’s targets are central to CEO Wael Sawan’s revamped strategy, which will focus the company on higher-margin projects, steady oil output, and growth in the production of natural gas to bolster shareholder returns.

In its recent annual update on its

energy transition strategy, Shell said it will target a 15-20 per cent reduction in net carbon intensity of its energy products by the end of the decade compared with 2016 levels. It had previously aimed for a 20 per cent cut.

Measuring emissions from the burning of fossil fuels by intensity, rather than in absolute terms, means a company can technically increase its fossil fuel output and overall emissions while using offsets or adding renewable energy or biofuels to its product mix, reports *Reuters*.

As the world’s largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) trader, Shell said it believes the product has a “critical role” to play in the energy transition by replacing more polluting carbon (coal) in electricity generation plants.

At the same time, Shell said it expects power sales, which include those from renewables, to be lower than previously forecast.

Shell retired its previous target

of a 45 per cent reduction in carbon intensity by 2035, with Mr Sawan telling *Reuters* that it was “perilous” for the company to set such a target given the level of uncertainty surrounding the “energy transition trajectory”.

“We are trying to focus our company, our organisation, and our shareholders on a waypoint that is much clearer ... which is 2030,” he said.

Shell’s annual update also introduced a new “ambition” to cut overall emissions from oil products (diesel, petrol, jet fuel, etc) sold to customers by 15-20 per cent by 2030 compared with 2021.

These end-user emissions, referred to as Scope 3, account for around 95 per cent of the company’s greenhouse gas emissions.

Shell also maintained its target to halve emissions from its own operations (known as Scope 1 and 2 emissions) by the end of the decade,

saying it had already achieved more than 60 per cent of that target.

Founder of activist shareholder group Follow This, Mark van Baal, told *Reuters* that the backtrack on its previous targets shows that Shell is “betting on the failure of the Paris Climate Agreement”.

Shell also faces legal challenges over its climate strategy and is appealing a Dutch court ruling that ordered it to cut its emissions more quickly.

As part of that strategy, Shell began company-wide staff reductions – including those in its low-carbon solutions division – to help fund savings of \$US3 billion (\$A4.6b).

It also sold its European power trading business, exited offshore wind and low-carbon projects, put US solar assets on sale, and placed its giant refining and petrochemical complex in Singapore under review.

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FORMER MMAL CEO SIGNORIELLO RETURNS AS CHAIR

By NEIL DOWLING

MITSUBISHI Motors Australia Ltd (MMAL) has appointed John Signoriello as chair of the board.

He was previously MMAL president and CEO before being promoted to Mitsubishi Motors Corporation head office as global marketing and sales executive officer in 2020.

As chair, Mr Signoriello will provide an advisory function to the board on corporate governance, strategy and corporate relations.

MMAL said that Mr Signoriello's recent experience in Tokyo will also enable him to provide support, guidance and mentorship to specific projects as well as encourage and foster cross-regional exchanges.

He takes on the board chair after a 35-year career with Mitsubishi starting with production control in Adelaide and through to regional sales manager for South Australia and the Northern Territory in 2012-2016 and then his role as president and CEO from 2017 through to 2020.

In his career, he was project leader in developing and having approved a business case for

Mitsubishi by design (Mitsubishi Special Vehicles), a mentor in the MMAL 2004 mentoring program and was a member of a state government and Mitsubishi group benchmarking automotive logistics best practices in Europe (2002).

He developed the logistics vision for Mitsubishi and established a project team to coordinate

the implementation and participated in EBA (enterprise bargaining agreement) teams to improve company working pattern flexibility.

As part of the EBA, he was part of the team to introduce the flexible working calendar and the team responsible for the introduction of the 'order to delivery' program that reduces vehicle delivery lead times.

Mr Signoriello also co-ordinated the introduction of the balanced scorecard in the supply division which ensures strategies are aligned to divisional goals and objectives, and managed the introduction of SAP in production control that replaced bill of material, scheduling systems, and inventory control.



John Signoriello

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

BARBARA NAMED SUZUKI AUS NATIONAL SALES BOSS

By NEIL DOWLING

SUZUKI Australia has promoted Jonathan Barbara to the position of national sales manager.

He started his automotive career in retail operations from 2010 before joining Suzuki Australia in 2015 as NSW district sales manager.

Mr Barbara has more than 13 years of sales, business development and account management experience before his promotion to sales operations manager in 2022.

Suzuki said Mr Barbara has a wealth of experience in the automotive industry and brings a proven track record of leadership and sales expertise to the role.

"His dedication to customer satisfaction and innovative sales strategies, perfectly positions him to steer the national sales team through to the next level of growth for the brand,"

the company said in a statement.

Commenting on the growth in his national sales team, Suzuki Australia general manager Michael Pachota said he was confident that Mr Barbara will play a pivotal role in further strengthening Suzuki's position in the market.



Jonathan Barbara

"Jonathan has developed excellent relationships with our network of NSW dealers, also laying some foundational groundwork across Australia in his sales operations role most recently," Mr Pachota said.

"I'm very proud of Jonathan's growth both in business and personally. I look forward to seeing him develop further on a national level, providing an even greater level of support to both our dealers and customers."

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

HAURISSA JOINS ZEEKR

By NEIL DOWLING

NEW brand entrant to Australasia, Zeekr, has appointed Andrew Haurissa as its head of marketing for Australia and New Zealand.

He was previously deputy marketing director of Chery Australia, before which he worked in the consumer electronics division of Huawei Australia.

Zeekr, part of Geely which also controls Volvo, Polestar and Lotus among others, will launch in Australia in the second half of this year.

Mr Haurissa said: "I am thrilled to announce that I have joined Zeekr Australia as the head of marketing ANZ."



Andrew Haurissa

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German publication says BMW unlikely to renew 4 Series as model consolidation becomes priority

By MATT BROGAN
GERMAN publication *BMW Blog* claims that BMW will not renew its 4 Series range for the next generation, citing sources from within the Munich marque who say there are “currently no plans to develop a CLAR-based BMW 4 Series”.

The article says the decision dates to when the battery electric vehicle



(BEV) market appeared “highly promising”, necessitating the consolidation of certain products within the BMW portfolio.


Further, it suggests this was particularly relevant with the introduction of NCAR (electrified) platform-based models, such as the i3 sedan and i4 coupe.

Yet, the electric vehicle landscape has changed quickly. Many manufacturers – including BMW – are reconsidering their all-electric strategies, focusing instead on those segments with the greatest number of sales.

The article suggests that BMW Neue Klasse range of models –

LAUNCH APR

GWM Tank 500
Isuzu MU-X 1.9
Jeep Wrangler
Mazda MX-5
Mitsubishi Pajero Sport
Peugeot 408
Porsche Panamera
Toyota Yaris
Toyota Yaris Cross
Volkswagen Touareg



Incoming 1.9-litre turbo-diesel MU-X offers Isuzu buyers the potential of more tank range and lower purchase price albeit with less power, torque and towing capacity but the carryover 3.0-litre turbo-diesel remains for those who need it.

FULL NEW CAR DIARY: [CLICK HERE](#)

which are expected to comprise i3 sedan, i4 coupe and i4 cabriolet – will “cover this market segment comprehensively”.

Reading between the lines, it seems model variants including the Gran Coupe will make way for more traditional SUV counterparts.

Introduced at the Internationale Automobil Ausstellung (IAA) in Munich last September, the BMW Vision Neue Klasse showcases “what the next generation of

vehicles from the core BMW brand will look like”, and in particular the eighth-generation 3 Series due in 2025.

Likely to be badged as the i3 and sold alongside petrol- and diesel-powered 3 Series variants, *GoAuto* understands the Neue Klasse will ride on all-new underpinnings, leaving the ICE variants to continue using the current seventh-generation car’s platform.

This is becoming an increasingly

common strategy, with ageing models such as the Porsche Macan, Hyundai i30 hatch and others having their lifecycles extended through the electric transition – likely helped by the watering down of Euro 7 emissions regulations.

BMW said the Vision Neue Klasse embodies a clear design language with expansive surfaces and “just a few distinct character lines”.

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Ford reverses plans to go agency

Ford Europe to adopt hybrid franchise model after trial shows better results



By By NEIL DOWLING
FORD Motor Company has reversed plans to adopt the agency sales model in Europe and will remain with a conventional franchise model operating in a reduced dealer network.

The about-face was attributed to Ford's trial in the Netherlands last year which found that improved data sharing between the OEM and dealers had significant benefits.

It said improved management of data across its sales points means Ford can better gauge the effects of marketing campaigns, see what its cars are being cross-shopped against, determine how far prospective customers get through the buying process and provide better, more relevant information to its customers, based on frequently asked questions.

Australian Automotive Dealer Association CEO James Voortman said Ford in Europe has become the latest brand to walk away from its

plans to implement an agency model. "A few weeks ago it was JLR in the UK. Four years ago, agency was being touted as the future of automotive retail," he said.

"Now it seems the gloss is well and truly starting to wear off. My sense is that OEMs are realising that agency requires resourcing and brings risk, particularly in a high supply environment."



James Voortman

He said that it will be interesting to see the next steps "but at the end of the day manufacturing and retailing are two very different skill sets and from the AADA perspective the latter is best left to the dealer".

Ford announced in February last year that it planned to adopt the agency sales model across its European retail network after trialling it in the Netherlands. Core to the plan was Ford's decision to move to a higher-priced model range that focused on profit rather than volume.

Continued next page

SupercarBlondie heats up prestige auction market

Online motoring phenomenon with traffic in the billions starts auction for high-end cars

Cyber rules kill off car models

New-car model choice reduces as Europe drives cyber vulnerable cars off the road

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The car-maker said this would give it more control over pricing and to facilitate a more direct relationship between it and its customers. It would also have allowed for the brand to introduce a more consistent approach to marketing, strategy and messaging across all its retailers.

At that time, Ford of Europe boss Martin Sander told *Autocar* magazine in an interview that: “Agency is definitely the way to go. We’ve decided that we are going to switch to the agency model in Europe over the next few years.”

Now, Ford will use a new hybrid retail approach that uses its established franchise dealerships and focuses on the opportunities of data sharing.

Ford’s sales and brand management

chief for EVs in Europe, Anna Lena Strigel, told *Autocar* that the hybrid is more like “an advanced franchise model, where we use the latest systems to get more insights about customers, and we can really follow the customer journey end to end, while still keeping the franchise partner as the very important backbones of our system”.



Anna Lena Strigel

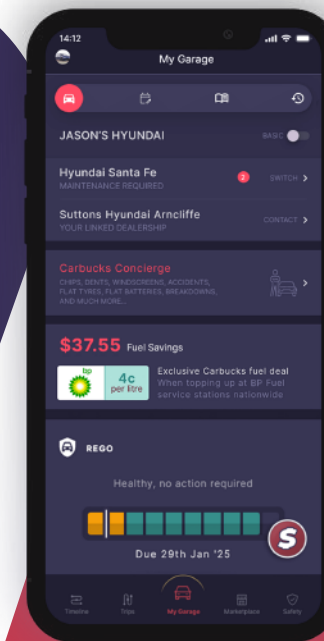
“Learnings have brought us to an evolved franchise network,” she said. Ms Strigel indicated that the decision to remain with franchising was possible because of the role that data-sharing can now play in Ford’s sales operations.

“We believe in the power of having full transparency of data sharing between OEMs and franchise partners,” she said.

“In terms of the systems, that’s a

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real evolution – and a real requirement for being successful going forward.”

Improved management of data across its sales points means Ford can better gauge the effects of marketing campaigns, see what its cars are being cross-shopped against, determine how far prospective customers get through the buying process and provide better, more relevant information to its customers, based on frequently asked questions.

Ms Strigel said that physical

dealerships remained integral in this model because while some 90 per cent of Ford customers “start the journey online”, she said “nearly all customers actually make the switch between digital and physical”.

“For most customers, a car is the second biggest investment that they’re making in their life, apart from a house, so it’s something they consider very well,” she said.

“In Europe, we see that most customers are simply not ready to

do the complete transaction online. We had expected that (shift) to be faster, but the reality shows us that customers wished to have a physical interaction for the purchase, not only to get the test drive but also to have physical guidance during the transaction process.”

For that reason, she said, Ford sees “the impact and power of our franchise partners.”

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SupercarBlondie heats up prestige auction market

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Online motoring phenomenon with traffic in the billions starts auction for high-end cars

By JOHN MELLOR

AUSTRALIAN-BORN online international motoring phenomenon SupercarBlondie – aka Alex Hirschi – is leveraging her huge online traffic numbers to launch a new virtual international auction of high-end collectible automobiles.

Called SBX Cars, the new auction site was launched on April 2 off the back of Ms Hirschi's huge international audience of 110 million followers across numerous social media platforms generating some two



Alex Hirschi

billion views a month. Her new prestige collectible auction initiative comes at a time of change in the high-end collectible vehicles auction market.

Earlier this year the British-based online auction Collecting Cars announced that it was looking for growth in its Australasian operations this year as it moved to fill the gap left by the closure of Australia's long-time vintage and classic car auction, Shannons.

Late last year Shannons announced that it was leaving the classic and

vintage car auction business because it was becoming highly competitive.

Collecting Cars was founded in the UK in 2019 and began selling cars listed from Australia in 2020. It was established to take on the automotive activities of international auction houses such as RM Sotheby's and Bonhams.

The SB Media Group says that the SBX Cars digital auction platform has gone live with more than \$100 million in consignments confirmed

pre-launch including several world first exclusives.

The auction not only features a one of nine Lamborghini Veneno Roadster but also a one of three ever made Lamborghini Veneno Coupe. It includes the world's first Mercedes-AMG One and world's first Hyperion XP-1 prototype to be sold at public auction.

The auction also features a Tesla Cybertruck at no reserve, one of three La Ferrari prototypes and

Tyde's first hydrofoiling electric glass yacht designed by BMW.

SBX Cars says it is the only platform to specialise in classic cars, hypercars, supercars and special vehicles.

The SBX Cars site has also managed to secure the auction rights to a collection of genuine John Player Special racing cars from the legendary Lotus F1 team of the 1970s and 1980s.

Continued next page



The team behind the dealers.



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The collection includes grand prix cars driven by Nigel Mansell, Elio de Angelis, Ronnie Peterson, Johnny Dumfries among others. It includes the team’s transporters as well as F1 team leader Colin Chapman’s personal aeroplane that the Lotus team used during that period. Some of Colin Chapman’s personal vehicles are also included in the collection.

SBX Cars says there has never been a single collection of Formula One history to be offered at auction all at once.

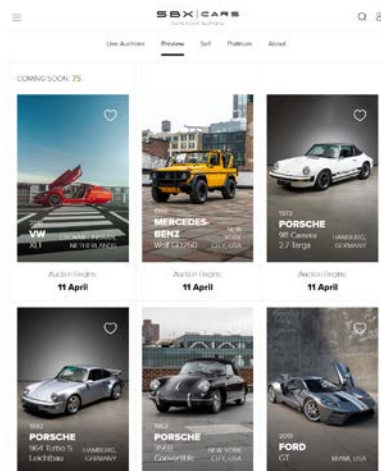
On the classic car side, the auction features cars such as a Mercedes 300SL Gullwing, a Lamborghini Miura, a BMW 507, an Aston Martin DB5 and an Isdera 036i spyder.

The cost of selling a car on SBX Cars starts with a standard listing at \$250. The seller provides their own high-quality photography and completes the vehicle information details for the SBX production team.

The premium package costs \$950 which includes professional auction photography services and the assembly of details by the auction team.

For the rarest vehicles and collections, the team will create a custom package designed to suit the specific needs of the vehicle including preparing the listing and a bespoke marketing/sales plan, as well as the opportunity to be featured on a high-profile platinum page.

Once the auction has ended successfully, SBX Cars connects the



seller and the buyer to finalise the purchase of the car.

The company said that the unprecedented quality and size of consignments for a new auction company was a direct result of Ms Hirschi’s reputation for delivering on breaking through industry norms in the automotive arena.

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Cyber rules kill off car models



Porsche Macan

New-car model choice reduces as Europe drives cyber vulnerable cars off the road

By NEIL DOWLING

A LIST of new European vehicles is heading for the history books as new cyber security rules this year make them unable to meet incoming regulations.

The rules, announced in 2022 after the United Nations adopted a new cybersecurity and security management system standard, apply to 50 countries including Australia.

Models set to be axed in most markets include the Porsche Macan, Cayman and Boxster (ICE versions only), Volkswagen Up, Smart, and some models from Renault, Mercedes-Benz and Audi, including the TT and R8.

The regulation, which applies from July 7 although all affected

vehicles are no longer being marketed, concerns the ability of a connected device to be vulnerable to hacking. In relation to the automobile industry, cars have become increasingly interconnected which has created numerous opportunities for exploitation.

“Increasingly, vehicle-to-vehicle communication meant to reduce crashes, is vulnerable to hacking because it may lack processes for securing such messages,” *Wards Auto* reported.

“It is currently possible for malicious actors to send messages to vehicles that could alter their course or cause the auto-braking system to activate.

“Experts say there are now more

software engineers than mechanical engineers in the automotive industry.

“As vehicles become increasingly sophisticated, manufacturers must ensure that security keeps pace with innovation, including securing the interface, or communication, that vehicles have with outside sources including phone apps, other cars, charging stations and onboard services.”

Wards Auto reported that car-makers have spent an estimated

\$A500 billion on autonomy, connectivity, electrification, smart/shared mobility and other vehicle technologies.

That technology has led to cars becoming increasingly interconnected, creating numerous opportunities for exploitation.

Experts said that hackers could hold vehicles to ransom in the future, locking up systems until the owner caves to their demands.

Some of the ways vehicles

are connected include in-car emergency services, GPS services and phone apps.

Wards Auto said emergency services, such as OnStar which allows the driver to communicate with people when the car is disabled, create an entry point for hackers.

There are also in-dash systems that allow drivers to search for fuel stations, use GPS and interact with their phones.

Continued next page

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Each of these systems represents a potential door for hacking.

“As autonomous driving evolves, vehicles transmit more information about road conditions, how the engine is running, and traffic congestion to data collectors. Each of these interactions offers potential vulnerabilities to hackers,” it reported.

“Hacking is possible through phone apps that allow owners to activate climate control and door locks. Unfortunately, hijacking becomes possible through those apps when parked and while driving.”

The new standards were announced in 2022, but car builders were given two years to prepare for them.

Volkswagen, the largest car-maker in Europe, has already ceased production of models including the Up hatch and T6.1 Transporter van.

Volkswagen AG’s CEO of passenger cars, Thomas Schäfer, told Australian cybersecurity publication *Cyber Daily* that the decision to discontinue the models was made

due to the overwhelming cost of keeping them alive under the new standards.

“Otherwise, we would have to integrate a completely new electronics architecture,” he said.

“That would simply be too expensive.”

Manufacturers, including Porsche said that some models would only be built for overseas markets.

Center of Automotive Management representative Stefan Bratzel said in the *Cyber Daily* report that the cost to keep these cars would be as much as several million Euros per model.

“After July 7, car manufacturers will have to prove that they had a certified management system in place during a model’s development, which is very difficult to do with older cars that were developed before the announcement, particularly as many of these cars are due for updates and their service life is shorter,” it said.

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Breakfast hears that women are looking for different things in the dealership than men

By JOHN MELLOR

RECENT research by RFI Global on the Australian auto finance landscape has shown that when it comes to researching finance options for the car purchase, women are further ahead of the curve than men.



Anna Perera-Shaw

A presentation of RFI Global research commissioned by Angle Auto Finance showed that women consider car financing options earlier than men, and that finance considerations were on the agenda for women even before the brand or model came into the picture. Affordability was also front-of-mind for women.

The research also revealed that women are keeping their

cars for longer and intend to run them for longer than men. This is a consideration for dealerships when calling customers to change over their cars. Women may be less ready to change than men.

The RFI research is a survey of car buying customers who have been approved for a car loan and have bought a car in the past two years.

Addressing the recent inaugural ‘Women in Auto’ breakfast sponsored by Angle Auto Finance, the insights director of RFI Global, Anna Perera-Shaw, said that what stood out in the data was the fact that women think about finance earlier in the journey.

“So before they walk into the

dealership, before they start researching car brands, they’re thinking: ‘I need finance to buy this car’.”

“Men think about finance later, according to our research,” she said.

Ms Perera-Shaw spoke as part of a panel discussion featuring industry expert Carol Lydford; Angle Auto Finance’s head of strategic growth, Susan Jobson; and Angle Auto Finance’s chief

people officer, Allyson Carlile. This followed Julie Bale, CIO at Energy Australia’s keynote presentation.


Ms Perera-Shaw also said men first start thinking about the car they need and then start thinking about how they are going to pay for it. Men, she said, are also more likely to be thinking about additional features or the brand, or want to know more about the car itself.

“The distinction is that women


are thinking about affordability front-of-mind. What can I afford? What are my needs?

“Also, the reliability of the vehicles is quite important, particularly for women. Is this going to last me through the years? Does it meet the needs of myself or my family? The size of the vehicle and the overall running costs are important which is interesting when we think about EVs as well.


Continued next page




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MODEL OF CAR



ADDITIONAL FEATURES

WOMEN



50% of women
started thinking about finance before they began the car buying process



RELIABILITY



RUNNING COST



SIZE OF VEHICLE

Women are more likely than men to have conducted research for their loan through visiting a car dealership or speaking to friends or family

I conducted Google searches	42%	I visited car dealerships	50%
I visited car dealerships	39%	Online car buying sites e.g. carsales.com.au	43%
Online car buying sites e.g. carsales.com.au	35%	I conducted Google searches	42%
Car review site e.g. Drive.com	35%	I spoke to friends/ family members/ colleagues	39%
Websites of specific car brands	30%	Websites of specific car brands	30%

Source: RFI GLOBAL

Continued from previous page

“This is not to say that some women aren’t very car-focused, some love the brand, love the speed and love the luxury. But what we do see is that finance focus among women to a greater extent than men.

“The research process is also really interesting. Women are using a greater number of research sources on average compared to men. They are speaking to friends and family and are walking into a dealership looking for advice. They’re going online, they’re having conversations, whereas men are more likely to use less research sources.

“Women are more likely to be asking trusted peers, particularly their

friends and family; is this the right choice? What would you recommend? What have you found to be good for your needs?

“We think about the role that dealerships play as well. Women are going there for guidance. They’re going there to ask questions to see their options and they really rely on that guidance.

“We see in the RFI research that one of the reasons people like car finance is because it offers certainty of repayments, particularly in an environment, like we are in now, where costs keep going up.

“And when our expenses are going up and grocery prices are going up,

knowing that my car loan is this amount every fortnight or every month and is a sure thing, is something that just gives them that certainty they can budget it in and they know what they’ve signed themselves up for.

“So women are mentioning finance early in the journey.”

Ms Perera-Shaw said that having women sales staff would be an advantage in the showroom because women are seeking guidance and that walking into a dealership and seeing women there who they can talk to could help make them feel comfortable.

“When we think about negotiation, specifically, the RFI research also

showed that men are more likely to have successfully negotiated elements of the car; whether it’s additional features, additional discounts or added benefits.

“But I think there’s something interesting about considering who is in your dealerships. Is it a place that women feel is accessible? Is it a place where they are comfortable asking questions, where they can negotiate and discover what their options are?”

Ms Perera-Shaw also said that women are looking for a purchase that can last a long time.

“We find in the research that on average women are actually holding

on to their cars longer compared to men and that they intend to keep the car for longer as well.

“So they’re looking for something that really meets their needs and will last.”

Ms Perera-Shaw said that researching EVs would involve a completely different point of reference.

But, she said, because of women’s inclination towards early research, women are actually in a great position to be getting ready to step into the EV space because of the way they think about vehicle purchasing and financing.

“The interesting thing with EVs, and I think this is a resistance point, is the fact that all of us who own an ICE vehicle know how to use it, we know what it involves, we know how to get petrol, we know what kind of petrol to use, and we have probably owned a few cars in our lifetime.

“But buying an EV requires different information. Where are the chargers? Is my house set up to actually get solar panels that can charge my batteries? Do I have the storage? Do I live in an apartment in the city? Is this EV really feasible for me or my family? Maybe a hybrid? Which way do I go?”

“There are all these extra considerations and right now I think that is still a barrier,” she said.

[FULL STORY: CLICK HERE](#)



Porsche opens new HQ

Refurbished head office for Porsche is for employee numbers that have doubled in a decade

By NEIL DOWLING

PORSCHE Cars Australia has revved up its image with high-performance renovations, to its head office, updating technology and increasing space for its burgeoning workforce which has doubled in size in the past 10 years.

The rejuvenation is timely: PCA sold more than 6000 vehicles in 2023 and is expecting 2024 to be the biggest year on record, with a substantial increase in new product launches along with increased sales.



The six-month construction period leaves PCA head office in Collingwood's Victoria Parade with updated facilities and enhanced internal layouts to create additional space.



Daniel Schmollinger

The new interior design uses an open-plan layout and state-of-the art amenities. Included are various multi-purpose meeting rooms, each named after famous Australian racing circuits.

The design ensures the new working and digital environment has abundant natural light that the company said would feed the new forest of indoor plants and living green wall.

PCA CEO and managing director Daniel Schmollinger said: "The new Porsche Cars Australia head office has been designed to create the right

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"The people behind Porsche drive this history-making sports car brand and the right surroundings help foster the performance-driven mindset they all share."

Porsche celebrated the opening of its newly refreshed Melbourne-based headquarters with a variety of guests.

Joining the festivities were several Porsche AG executives, including vice president of Region

Overseas and Emerging Markets, Matthias Becker; and vice president Product Line Panamera, Dr Thomas Friemuth.

UK soldier, adventurer, TV host and best-selling author Ant Middleton made a surprise appearance.

He led a fascinating conversation and Q&A session about the importance of high performance. He also discussed the focused and zero-excuses approach Porsche has taken over the past 75 years to create its

ongoing success.

"Porsche shows what a remarkable high-performance culture can achieve," he said.

Porsche sold 6052 new cars in Australia during 2023, up 7.9 per cent over the previous year, with the best-seller being the Macan (2925 sales, up 6.9 per cent on 2022) while sales of the all-electric Taycan jumped by 24.4 per cent to 535 units.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)



Ducati continues dealer refurbish

Bike-maker continues to overhaul/expand dealer network in Australia as it unveils new range

By COBEY BARTELS

DUCATI Australia invited dealers and VIP customers to a grand reveal of its exhilarating 2024 model range in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane as the red-blooded bike-maker continues to push its market presence Down Under.

GoAutoNews Premium joined the party in Brisbane, alongside a healthy crowd of die-hard ‘Ducatis’ as they eyed off a range of the brand’s naked, sport and adventure models illuminated by suitable red lighting.

The Italian brand says it is aiming for new models to be released around the same time as they are in Europe and to reinforce the point

air freighted the new models into Australia for the range launch.

The four new models were premiered by Ducati product specialist, Nick Selleck, who lifted the curtain on the 2024 Multistrada



Sergi Canovas

V4 S Grand Tour, Multistrada V4 RS, DesertX Rally and Hypermotard Mono – a 2024 range that covers all bases for the Bologna-based manufacturer.

The new 659cc ‘Superquadro Mono’ engine revealed in the new Hypermotard Mono, which produces 77.5hp with a redline of 10,250 rpm, is the brand’s first ‘thumper’ in 30 years signalling a return to its single-cylinder roots.

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Ducati also recently debuted its first single-cylinder motocross bike, taking pole position at the Italian Motocross Championship on its first outing before finishing second overall for the weekend, suggesting the single-cylinder is back in a big way.

Managing director of Ducati Australia, Sergi Canovas, also showed a number of special collaborative models, like the 500-unit Diavel for Bentley – an opulent

Batur-themed V4 Diavel finished in Scarab Green. Sadly, all 500 are sold.

Events of this magnitude are new for Ducati, Mr Canovas said after the unveiling, as the bike-maker aims to give Australians the same level of early access as Europeans when a new model range arrives.

“This is a new activity we are doing this year,” he said. “Because we are far away from Europe, it takes a bit longer for the bikes to arrive here and sometimes the clients

want to see the bike and they want to test it and touch it.

“So we decided to bring them here by air and show them in a very premium environment.”

Dealer network upgrades

Ducati Australia has been proactively overhauling its dealer network in recent years, with a fresh corporate identity and refurbishments to bring the sites up to par with the brand’s premium focus.

Continued next page

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“We managed to bring almost all of our network into adapting to the ‘new Ducati’, refurbishing all of the dealerships with a new corporate identity, bringing new partners more into the premium automotive sector,” Mr Canovas said.

“The first is obviously how you present the brand and this is about the dealership and corporate identity, and the second is how the customer or the client gets the best experience.

“So almost every dealer is refurbished or is now receiving their updated corporate identity and I’m expecting that by the end of 2024 almost 90 per cent of our network will be completely refurbished.”

A new Cairns dealership and service centre is the latest move in Ducati’s expansion into areas otherwise uncharted, made possible by the reach of its parent company



Audi Group.

“The fact that we opened in Cairns is a result of being part of Audi Group, because we can find the synergies,” Mr Canovas said.

“We have these kinds of advantages being part of the group, to be able to expand in areas that normally by ourselves we wouldn’t be able to.”

This follows a recent expansion into regional New South Wales with Albury Wodonga-based Blacklocks Motorcycles, as well as the appointment of new dealer partners Worthington Motorcycles on the Central Coast.

Mr Canovas confirmed there were more dealerships in the works, but could not share the finer details.

“We have some plans, but we are in the first steps now,” he said.

When asked if Ducati’s push into the adventure and motocross segments will lead to more rural dealers, Mr Canovas said the primary focus is on maintaining a premium brand presentation.

“What we are doing is making sure that the brand is represented properly, so we need to make sure that from a dealer point of view it’s an investment that has a return and we will not compromise the presentation of the brand,” he said.

“Obviously with the arrival of motocross, it’s given us the chance to look into more regional areas.”

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Item Location: Moorebank, Sydney, New South Wales | Lot 7505
Odometer: 24,024 Showing
Transmission: 9sp Automatic
Engine: 4 Cyl, 2.5L, Turbo
Fuel: Hybrid

2022 Ford Transit Custom VN 340s SWB 5D Van
Item Location: Altona North, Melbourne, Victoria | Lot 1490
Odometer: 34,895 KM Showing
Transmission: 6spd Automatic
Engine: 4 Cyl, 2.0L, Direct Injection
Fuel: Diesel

2020 Toyota Camry AXVH71R Ascent Hybrid 4D Sedan
Item Location: Moorebank, Sydney, New South Wales | Lot 7505
Odometer: 35,378 KM Showing
Transmission: CVT
Engine: 4 Cyl, 2.5L, Injection
Fuel: Hybrid

2022 Mercedes-Benz S-Class W223 S450 4Matic 4D Sedan
Item Location: Moorebank, Sydney, New South Wales | Lot 7505
Odometer: 263,353 KM Showing
Transmission: 6spd Tiptronic
Engine: 4 Cyl, 3.0L, Turbo
Fuel: Diesel

2022 Mercedes-Benz S-Class W223 S450 4Matic 4D Sedan
Item Location: Moorebank, Sydney, New South Wales | Lot 7505
Odometer: 27,442 KM Showing
Transmission: 9sp Automatic
Engine: 4 Cyl, 2.5L, Turbo
Fuel: Diesel



Increasingly complex vehicle specifications leads AutoGrab and JATO to join forces

By JOHN MELLOR

WE ALL know that a lack of processing chips was a prime reason for the infamous vehicle shortages of the recent past, and numbers of between 1400 and 1500 semiconductor chips for each car, and even some cars said to have as many as 3000 chips, have made the industry realise the extent to which microprocessor production is controlling automotive production.

But another symptom of chip proliferation is vehicle complexity.

Every new chip comes with a new function or feature, or a series of features or functions, and when it comes to cataloguing these the list is becoming massive across the scores

of brands and hundreds of models and variants.

New brands are arriving almost monthly with an array of vehicles brimming with new devices, displays, drivelines and multiple sources of power technology.



Chris Gardner

The proliferation of advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) and their various features adds massive complexity. So too does the virtual explosion of various EVs, hybrids etc, all with their own unique specifications and features.

These have all added tens of thousands of new lines of data that need to be documented and sorted.

It is against this background that leading global automotive data firm JATO Dynamics and recently-minted

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auto market analyst AutoGrab have ventured into a partnership.

The task has become so complex that both parties sought each other's help by way of a partnership to shape the future of automotive intelligence data.

The partnership sees the two firms sharing data, with JATO gaining a greater insight into Australia's used car market and AutoGrab gaining international data to support its international expansion into the

ASEAN region and key European markets in 2024, including Malaysia and the UK.

Data from the partnership, which began in January 2024, has already begun flowing through to the AutoGrab platform. This includes AutoGrab's valuation data, price forecasting and insurance records.

The companies say that every single car has a story and that it is essential that each story is as complete as possible if the data

captured for it is to be meaningful and have value.

AutoGrab chief executive and co-founder Chris Gardner said in a statement: "Vehicles are evolving at an unprecedented pace, with advancements like ADAS features, intricate safety systems and bespoke options becoming standard.

"This complexity demands a deeper understanding and visibility of their unique attributes.

Continued next page

“Every single car has a story and that it is essential that each story is as complete as possible if the data captured for it is to be meaningful and have value.”

– AutoGrab

Continued from previous page

We as an industry have to ensure that every car’s story is told in full or we risk undervaluing their true potential and even their safety.

“This partnership brings us closer to a future where the stories are known, where insurers can assess assets with precision, and where the industry as a whole benefits from better transparency and better data.”

Mr Gardner said to “think of it as creating a comprehensive passport for every vehicle, shedding light on every detail you need to know”.

Mr Gardner told *The Australian* that more complete data on the safety features of a car could mean, for example, a lower premium for the owner because the insurance risk allocated to that car was lower.

“If a consumer goes to, let’s say AAMI, and types in their registration plate and some information about their vehicle, it’s very important that AAMI knows that you have a lane departure

warning system because that can increase or decrease the likelihood of an accident,” Mr Gardner said.

“But they haven’t been getting this data upfront, which means that the cost of premiums have been skyrocketing globally. So there’s a very big incentive for insurance companies to really understand the asset that they’re insuring to help bring that price down for consumers.”

He said the alliance would “create the most comprehensive view of the vehicle than we’ve seen before”.

AutoGrab’s platform captures and aggregates real-time, market-wide data on all vehicles listed online, using an AI-driven machine learning model. He said JATO’s expertise and global reach make it an ideal ally as AutoGrab ventures into new territories, including a strategic expansion into the UK

Mr Gardner said: “AutoGrab is very excited to partner with JATO, a significant move for our expansion

in Australia and internationally. This collaboration expands our data capabilities, ensuring our users access more accurate and comprehensive vehicle information.

“Leveraging JATO’s extensive vehicle data, we are refining our valuation services for the market and deepening our insights for forecasting and analytics.

“This alliance significantly enhances our ability to provide customers with critical safety information, including details on ADAS systems, battery health, and emissions data. It also complements AutoGrab’s ongoing technological advancements, enabling us to offer advanced vehicle information, such as identifying specific features from a vehicle’s VIN.

“As we expand, this partnership reinforces our dedication to delivering superior vehicle data and insights. This announcement is

crucial in solidifying AutoGrab’s position as a leading entity in the vehicle information sector, not just in Australia but as we expand into key international markets.”

JATO global head of digital marketplaces Peadar Walsh said: “JATO is excited to partner with



Peadar Walsh

AutoGrab as they continue to grow their footprint globally. The combination of JATO’s specification and option solutions and AutoGrab’s pricing solutions will enhance our customer experience across several segments including OEM, digital and dealer.

“Our leasing customers will also benefit from having access to a future value platform, while our insurance customers can avail JATO’s rich advanced driver specification system specification combined with AutoGrab’s pre-accident valuation.

“We look forward to working with AutoGrab in the coming months

and into the future as we continue to meet the needs of the broader global automotive industry,” Mr Walsh said.

London-based JATO Dynamics was founded nearly 40 years ago and has grown into the world’s leading supplier of automotive business intelligence across more than 50 countries.

AutoGrab, which is based in Melbourne, was founded by Mr Gardner and Daniel Werzberger in 2020.

AutoGrab’s platform captures and aggregates real-time, market-wide data on all vehicles listed online, using an AI-driven machine learning model. This supports AutoGrab to provide a suite of tools and platforms for customers. As well as providing a current value of the vehicle, the business can also provide a prediction of future values and how prices might change over time.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)



BYD opens flagship store

Cremorne store first of 100 national centres to showcase BYD's EVs and battery technology

By NEIL DOWLING
AHEAD of its opening in May, EV-maker BYD has cut the ribbon to present its flagship concept store in Melbourne that aims to be an experience centre promoting BYD products and BYD's battery technology.

The store, in Cremorne, is promoted as an experience centre that allows consumers to access information about EVs and BYD's technology and products.

It was launched by **Luke Todd**, BYD founder and president, Wang Chuanfu, and the executive chairman of BYD's Australian distributor Luke Todd along with BYD Asia-Pacific general manager Liu Xueliang.

Mr Xueliang said: "This store

symbolises our growth. At BYD, we'll continue to bring our innovative technology and projects to the Australian market.

"This week we'll have our 20,000th BYD delivery here, so we're very glad to make another 20,000 good friends in Australia."

EVDirect managing director and executive chairman Luke Todd said that BYD's commitment to sustainability, combined with Victoria's reputation as a vibrant, forward-thinking state "makes Melbourne the ideal location to introduce even more Australians to the company's new energy range".

The new flagship store is part of BYD's ambitious expansion,



Luke Todd

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with plans to offer consumers the opportunity to immerse themselves in its cutting-edge technology at up to 100 locations nationwide by 2025.

What we're trying to offer here is quintessential Melbourne-living and we think this inner-city location strengthens that pledge," Mr Todd said.

"The presence of Mr Wang and BYD's entire executive team here in Melbourne is testament to their

commitment to Australia.

"We are stepping into a new era for the automotive industry, with BYD as its leader. As soon as next month, everything changes with the introduction of DM-i (dual-motor intelligence) enabling ultra-low emissions without range anxiety.

"This new store enables us to deliver on that."

Already showcasing BYD's extensive new energy range, including the Dolphin, Seal and

Atto 3, the store will soon roll out the Seal U, which features the brand's new DM-i hybrid technology.

As part of the preview of the Cremorne flagship, Mr Wang also handed lucky customer Justin the keys to the store's first delivery, a Seal Performance.

The first BYD flagship concept store is in the automotive precinct in Church Street, Cremorne.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)



Isuzu extends life-saving support

MARKETING

L-R: Jackson Brennan, Junta Matsui, Adam Weir, Rhiannon Brinckman

Safeguarding Aussie beaches program secured with three-year partnership extension

By NEIL DOWLING

A NATIONAL partnership between Isuzu Ute Australia (IUA) and Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) has just concluded its third year but Isuzu has reaffirmed its commitment to beach safety by extending support for an additional three years.

Since joining forces in 2021, IUA has been an ally in SLSA's mission to safeguard Australian beaches and their visitors by providing significant annual contributions in addition to a fleet of 'rescue-ready' vehicles.

IUA managing director Junta Matsui said that three years into the partnership, SLSA's legacy of 117 years continued to inspire the company.

"We are honoured to extend our support for an additional three years,

recognising the profound impact they've had on the community and the ongoing commitment to their vital mission," he said.

"Embedded in the heart of local communities, the essence of SLSA lies in safeguarding Australian beaches and the people who frequent them.

"Isuzu Ute Australia is extremely proud to continue to support SLSA and the courageous individuals dedicated to beach safety through their patrols, training initiatives, and educational endeavours."

Mr Matsui said his company recognised the importance of providing SLSA with reliable and durable vehicles that can withstand the rigours of beach patrols.

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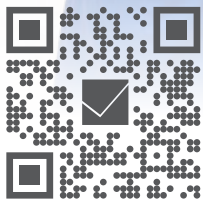


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