

Lightning is go

Remanufactured RHD F-150 Lightning 4x4 BEV utes ready for Aussie buyers, exports



F-150 Lightning at Lakeside Raceway near Brisbane

EXCLUSIVE
 By COBEY BARTELS

AUSTRALIAN owned and operated BossCap Group is bringing specialty automotive manufacturing on-shore under its umbrella of electric vehicle-focused companies with a view to enhancing the nation's sovereign capability.

Its right-hand-drive conversion and homologation program for the Ford F-150 Lightning – becoming Australia's first 4x4 battery electric ute – includes variants for commercial and private customers and is already

Founded in 2012, BossCap is no stranger to RHD conversions of imported vehicles but has now set its sights on the growing battery electric vehicle (BEV) market with the remanufacturing of electric utes

and trucks through its engineering arm, Advanced Manufacturing Queensland (AMQ).

The company also prepares the vehicles for private and commercial distribution, respectively through its AUSEV division and partnership with GB Electric Vehicles.

"AUSEV is the importer/distributor, Advanced Manufacturing Queensland



is the remanufacturer," explained BossCap chief strategy officer Brendan Kenny in an exclusive interview with *GoAuto*.

"We have partnered with GB Electric Vehicles for the commercial space, which is where most of the volume will be, and we will also provide a limited number of units to the retail market under the AUSEV brand," he said.

"We've heavily invested in EV and pivoted our entire operation to supply RHD EV utes to the market with a focus on fleet and commercial customers."

Continued next page

COVERED: AFTERMARKET EXPO



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AMQ is based at Brendale in north Brisbane, responsible for remanufacturing Ford F-150 Lightning models at its 8000-square-metre facility.

GoAuto was given a tour of the facility by chief manufacturing officer James Brycker, who brings more than 25 years of international OEM experience to the operation.

He explained that the factory was overhauled and now uses lean manufacturing principles, streamlining the production line to achieve OEM levels of output and quality.

The tour with Mr Brycker encompassed various bays, all efficiently organised like the many major OEM factories GoAuto has toured, with bays dedicated to quality checks of the Production Part Approval Process (PPAP) certified conversion components and various assembly areas.



James Brycker



AMQ remanufacturing facility



AMQ remanufacturing facility

Under Mr Brycker's guidance, the site is now capable of scaling the operation based on demand, with no shortage of stock on hand to service Australia's BEV-hungry fleet and commercial market.

The result is a right-hand drive conversion that achieves OEM levels of fit and finish while retaining the safety and driveability of the original vehicle, including the injection moulded dashboard that GoAuto found to be indistinguishable from the left-hand drive original.

AMQ invested more than \$5 million in design and tooling for the F-150 Lightning conversion across the instrument panel, brake and steering parts, and CCS2 charging conversion.

The result is Australia's first electric 4x4 ute, a fully homologated right-hand drive F-150 Lightning, ready for local consumption. As reported by GoAuto, our recent brief drive of the vehicle discovered a polished product reflective of the

experience and investment poured into the conversion and validation process.

Lightning port

As the Australian BEV market continues to heat up, with sales more than tripling in 2023 to reach 87,217 units, the 4x4 ute market lags

behind – a problem BossCap wanted to solve.

Mr Kenny explained that BossCap began its search for a suitable electric ute back in 2021, wanting a vehicle that offered a proven electric architecture and the durability to handle commercial use

Down Under.

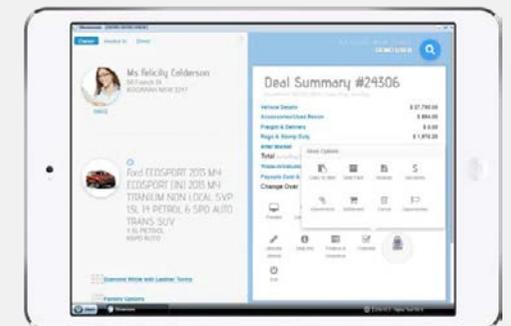
The firm landed on the F-150 Lightning, based on its strong driving range, motor outputs and carrying capacity that would make it suitable for severe-duty applications like remote field work.

Continued next page



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Continued from previous page
 “It’s a known product and it’s America’s best-selling pick-up truck, and this is not an EV conversion – this vehicle was originally designed to be an EV,” said Mr Kenny.

Finding a suitable mass-produced BEV to remanufacture was important for AUSEV, steering away from electric conversions.

“When you’re retrofitting a battery and new motors, things like the cooling system may be far more primitive than what an OEM vehicle will have,” explained Mr Kenny.

Testing and validation were undertaken by AUSEV’s commercial partner, GB Electric Vehicles (a division of fleet, heavy vehicle and mobile equipment specialist GB Auto), at the ex-Holden Lang Lang proving ground in Victoria to make sure the Lightning stacks up for fleet duties.

GB Auto is also responsible for fitting a mine-spec tray and safety pack to the F-150 Lightning, making it suitable for fleet use across the resources sector. A prototype model on-site even featured a colour-matched Norweld tray, showcasing the local aftermarket support available for commercial customers.

“GB have conducted extensive durability testing at the Lang Lang proving grounds, including comparison testing of our right-hand drive and a left-hand drive unit supplied by the Auto Innovation Centre,” said Mr Kenny,



F-150 Lightning

“They have done a tremendous amount of work to make sure the F-150 Lightning is suitable for the commercial market.”

Local testing was also undertaken, with a race track made available to AMQ to complement the Lang Lang trials, allowing the company to clock serious hours behind the wheel of the Lightning models.

“Having access to Lakeside Raceway has been a tremendous help – it’s just 20 minutes away which has accelerated the validation testing program,” said Mr Kenny.

“We now have fully homologated the vehicle for the Australian market.”

AUSEV is not stopping with the F-150 Lightning, though, sharing its plans with GoAuto to bring a mobile fast charger to Australia.

“AUSEV has some exciting products in the pipeline including a mobile charging solution in the form of a transportable battery and charger that will reduce both peak load requirements and fixed infrastructure upgrades for large

fleets,” said Mr Kenny.

The mobile DC charger will be fixed to a trailer, allowing customers to charge vehicles in the field – particularly suited to mining and utility applications.

Right-hand ready

When discussing the ideal



AMQ remanufacturing facility

customer for the F-150 Lightning models, AUSEV was quick to point out that there is global demand for a right-hand drive electric 4x4 ute.

“Anyone in the world who wants a right-hand drive EV Ute – not just Australia,” said Mr Kenny when asked about who is enquiring.

“We are particularly excited about the export opportunities.

“Locally in Australia though, our ideal customers are fleets and mines – so basically anyone who needs a reliable EV ute,” he said.

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Expo bounces back

Record attendance at 2024 Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo a show of industry optimism

By MATT BROGAN

THE Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo (AAAE) attracted a record crowd of more than 13,000 automotive professionals from across the country – and beyond – to Melbourne last week, where over 400 exhibitors from both local and international brands showcased the latest in technology, tools, accessories, parts, and equipment.

Positivity around the 2024 AAAE has given optimism to the biennial

event’s organiser, the Australian Auto Aftermarket Association (AAAA) which is already preparing for the next Expo in 2026.

AAAA chief executive officer Stuart Charity told *GoAuto* that the post-pandemic crowd was a return to form for the event.

“In 2022 we had a few challenges, obviously. We were only just coming out of lockdown and isolation rules were still having an impact on the numbers of visitors who could get



Stuart Charity



into Melbourne,” he explained.

“We also still had closed international borders, so we didn’t have the great representation of international visitors that we do this time around.

“Add to that the clash with the Grand Prix and it’s fair to say the event was more compact – and a considerable challenge for many involved.”

From adversity, Mr Charity said the industry has rebounded strongly,

showing greater advancement in technology that it was in turn keen to exhibit in Melbourne.

“But from that (adversity) has come a terrific turnout – reflecting the fact that the automotive aftermarket business is in pretty good shape overall,” he told *GoAuto*.

“We found that our exhibitors really doubled down on their efforts to get behind this year’s Expo, and that the new activities and training



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sessions we have put on are being very well supported.”

The 2024 event was the largest held by the AAAA with a record-breaking 13,282 trade visitors attending the four-day Expo.

“I am incredibly excited about the success of the 2024 Auto Aftermarket Expo and Collision Repair Expo,” said Mr Charity.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)
[More reports – next page](#)



Tough stuff

4WD Innovation Zone showcases Aussie off-road knowhow at Aftermarket Expo

By MATT BROGAN

THE Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo (AAAE) reprised and expanded upon the 4WD Innovation Zone that debuted at the 2022 event as a dedicated area where business-to-business (B2B) suppliers can introduce their products and technologies to others from within the sector.

With more than 2100 businesses in the four-wheel-drive sector nationally, the AAAE's 4WD Innovation Zone marked an

important part of the Australian automotive aftermarket landscape that continues to grow with new suppliers and accessories emerging on an almost daily basis.



Emma Laukens

“There are more than 5.5 million 4WDs on the roads in Australia, presenting fantastic opportunities for our country's more than 2100 businesses servicing the 4WD aftermarket to expand their ranges, improve the quality of their parts and accessories, and invest heavily





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in everything from production to promotion,” said AAAA 4WD Industry Council chair Emma Laukens.

“At the 4WD Innovation Zone, show attendees were able to see new products first, with many leading companies using the Expo to launch or provide sneak peeks of their latest offerings.

“With the 4WD industry continuing to see strong growth and representing a large part of Australia’s automotive

manufacturing and ingenuity, the opportunities in this space for members of the aftermarket is huge.”

Speaking to *GoAuto* at the Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo, Australian Auto Aftermarket Association chief executive officer Stuart Charity said the importance of four-wheel drive aftermarket suppliers cannot be understated.

“Four-wheel-drive SUVs and light commercials make up a considerable portion of the Australian car parc

and there are many owners who wish to modify their vehicles to suit their specific needs,” he said.

“Over the past 10 or so years we have also seen a huge increase in the number of fleets adapting vehicles for their requirements, which has all resulted in the scale of the four-wheel drive accessory market going through the roof.”

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)
More reports – next page



Tonnes of trophies

Multiple awards for Adelaide-based Redarc Group at Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo

By MATT BROGAN

SOUTH Australian automotive electronics manufacturer Redarc Group was one of several aftermarket industry players to be recognised for excellence and innovation at the 2024 Auto Aftermarket Awards held as part of last week’s Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo in Melbourne.

Nearly 700 industry guests gathered to share what is recognised as a major industry highlight, the awards spanning a range of categories, including the newly introduced Automotive Sustainability Business award, the

Automotive Education Excellence award, and the Women at the Wheel award.

The gala evening also marked the opportunity to honour several of the automotive aftermarket’s brightest stars.

Redarc Group managing director Anthony Kittel took home the Outstanding Service to Industry award while multiple Pedders Suspension and Brakes franchisee Lex Gelmi received the Kim Augner Young Achiever award.

Penrite Oil Company matriarch Margaret Dymond was inducted



Redarc innovation awards



Anthony Kittel

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to the Australian Automotive Aftermarket (AAAA) Hall of Fame, as was co-founder of technical information and training network The Automotive Technician, Jeff Smit.

“The awards dinner was a truly special night that reinforces my admiration for this incredible industry,” said AAAA chief executive Stuart Charity.

“The vibe was electric, and importantly we were able celebrate

and reward those achieving great things in our industry. Congratulations to all our award winners at the Gala, and the Innovation Awards Breakfast. It is inspirational for all of us.”

Speaking with *GoAuto* on the success of Redarc at this year’s awards, Mr Kittel said the Most Innovative New Product – Electrical award recognises the hard work and innovative thinking shown by the Redarc Group team.

“The TVMS Rogue was fully designed, developed, and manufactured in South Australia by our engineers. This advanced product recognises and provides for the sophistication and power requirements of larger caravans and more complex rear-of-body canopies, particularly in trade vehicles and commercial applications,” he said.

FULL STORY, WINNERS: [CLICK HERE](#)
[More reports – next page](#)



Minister Melissa Horne (centre) at the Expo Electrified Zone

Innovation welcomed

Victorian roads and road safety minister praises innovation at Aftermarket Expo

By MATT BROGAN

VICTORIAN roads and road safety minister Melissa Horne praised the rate of change and innovation taking place across the automotive industry during a visit to last week's Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo

(AAA) in Melbourne.

Minister Horne addressed AAA attendees at the Expo Electrified Zone demonstration area, where she also credited the work of the Australian Auto Aftermarket Association for supporting innovation.

"It is really good to be here to support the incredible work that the AAA is doing and to be able to see the innovations that are occurring with this sort of vehicle," she said referencing a Ford F-150 Lightning on display at the Expo.

The F-150 Lightning was recently acquired by the AAA's Auto Innovation Centre, along with a Polestar 2, assisted by a Victorian government grant drawn from the ZEV Commercial Sector Innovation Fund.



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New Conti MC7

Tested: Continental MaxContact MC7 to offer safer, sportier driving – replaces MC6 in June

By PETER BARNWELL

REPLACING the highly regarded Continental MaxContact MC6 premium performance passenger car tyre is the new-generation MaxContact MC7 (MC7) that hits the Australian market on June 1 priced similarly to its predecessor despite advances.

The MC7 was under development for three years in Germany and other countries and, according to Continental, has been engineered to deliver superior performance across the board compared with the MC6 and competitor brands.

GoAuto was invited to a test session for the new tyre in Sydney, attended by MC7 project leader Boon Yung Chan who had oversight

of the product’s gestation from start to finish and provided insights about its engineering process.

The MC7 sits in Continental’s range under the SC7, an all-out performance tyre suitable for track driving with high-powered cars whereas the MC7 is a sporty, high-performance tyre designed for enjoyment in both daily use and on weekend adventures that Continental says “fulfils the needs of Australian performance-oriented drivers”.

All of this was put to the test at a demonstration at Luddenham Racetrack west of Sydney.



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Aussie in charge of local Continental operation and broader East Asia Pacific region talks tyres

By PETER BARNWELL
CONTINENTAL is one of the major premium tyre companies represented in Australia and around the world supplying both OEMs and the retail sector in competition with Michelin, Bridgestone, Pirelli and others at the upper end of the market.

Locally, the brand is overseen by Mitchell Golledge who also wears the company’s more elevated Head of East Region Asia Pacific hat with the responsibility for driving business growth in the broader region.

A Melbourne native, Mr Golledge holds a Master’s Degree in Business and Marketing from RMIT University but started his working life in a much more down-to-earth vocation as a boilermaker and toolmaker/machinist.



Mitchell Golledge

This has no doubt grounded Mr Golledge through his working life thus far and is evident on conversing with him, which *GoAuto* was able to do recently at the launch of Continental’s new MC7 performance tyre in Sydney.

Asked about the vexed used tyre problem, Mr Golledge was able to comment from firsthand experience on what is happening in Australia as a director of Tyre Stewardship Australia (TSA).

“The TSA works towards creating productive outcomes for end-of-life tyres (EOLT) through increasing the use of locally tyre-derived products across segments like rail, roads, and civil engineering,” explained Mr Golledge.

“But there is still plenty to do as a proportion of our used tyres are cut

up, put into bales, and sent overseas as fuel for furnaces producing a range of other products or electricity.

“We have secured government grants and are heavily vested in sustainability, but we must find new uses for old tyres. That can be things such as road mix or use in the cement industry but a lot of EOLTs end up being sent overseas after being chopped up.”

Regarding parallel tyre imports (where some retailers buy large quantities of tyres from overseas then undercut the factory-backed operations on price) Mr Golledge said: “We do have conversations with some of our retailers but generally are not that worried about parallel imports.



“That’s because our tyres are specified for the Australian market in terms of quality, design, local demands, and expectations whereas parallel imports might be made for a range of other specifications like driving in cold or icy conditions using soft compounds and the like,” he said.

“These tyres have probably been manufactured for other areas so it’s really a case of us educating



our retailers.”
 With inflationary pressures on everyone’s mind, we asked Mr Golledge about the price of tyres particularly post-COVID-19 to which he replied: “They haven’t risen as much as many other products including cars that have gone up in that period.”

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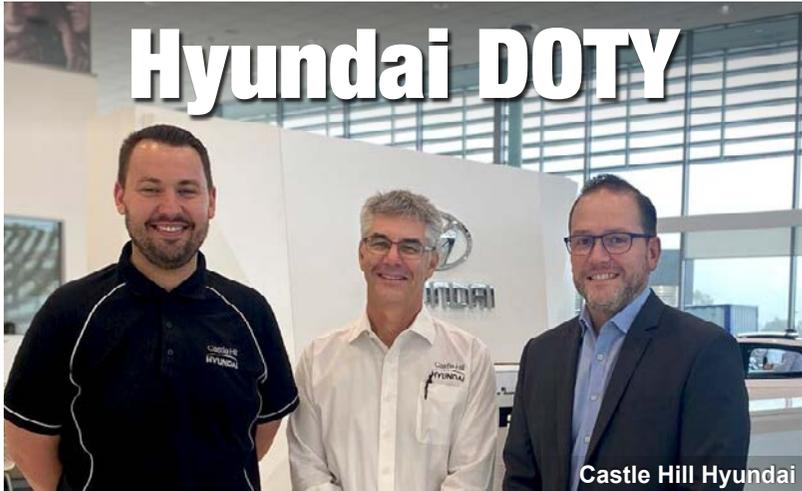


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Castle Hill Hyundai

Winners overcome fierce competition for 2023 Hyundai Platinum Dealer of the Year awards

By PETER BARNWELL
WITH more than 190 Hyundai dealers in Australia, competition is fierce for the annual Platinum Dealer of the Year awards but Castle Hill Hyundai recently distinguished itself by winning its second successive accolade in the award program's Category A.

National 2023 Platinum Dealer of the Year Winner for Categories A, B and C was Essendon Hyundai (Melbourne) while the national 2023 Platinum Dealer of

the Year Winner for Categories D and E was Holts Hyundai of Swan Hill in northern Victoria.

Hyundai's Platinum Dealer of the Year program recognises and rewards excellent performance across all aspects of Hyundai dealer operations, adjudicating the best of the best dealers as well as high-performing department managers who drive key outcomes within their departments.

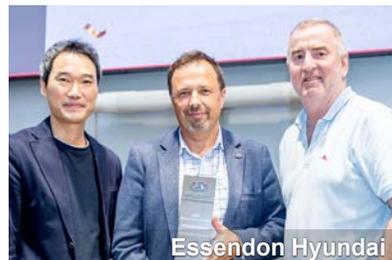
The awards program showcases achievement in the following areas of



Geoff Golden



Holts Hyundai



Essendon Hyundai

business operation: Sales, aftersales, parts, finance, and operations.

In 2023 Hyundai expanded the awards to recognise the following categories: Regional departmental awards; sales, aftersales, parts and finance, regional NPS (customer satisfaction) awards and eco mix awards.

Hyundai Motor Company Australia (HMCA) general manager of franchise management Geoff Golden said the brand's Platinum Dealer of the Year program "continues its tradition of recognising dealer excellence across all aspects of dealer operations".

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

NSW APPRENTICE SET FOR WORLDSKILLS IN FRANCE

By MATT BROGAN

TAFE New South Wales automotive students have excelled against hundreds of their peers from across the country and brought home seven medals at the recent WorldSkills Australia 2023 National Championships Closing Ceremony in Melbourne.

Among the medal winners is Ross Colquhoun, who took out the prestigious gold medal in the Automotive Mechanics category of Australia's largest skills competition, held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre last week.

"I walked into the competition not



L-R: Ross Colquhoun with mentor Kirk Trease

with a winning attitude, but I wanted to learn something no matter what with no real expectation to be on the podium," said Mr Colquhoun.

"So, when my name got called, it was pretty surreal. Honestly, I'm still trying to process it now."

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S3 ups game



Facelifted Audi S3 to match VW Golf R's 245kW/420Nm output, here later in 2024

By MATT BROGAN

AUDI has revealed details of its facelifted S3 this week, the hot hatch and sedan range now matching the power and torque values offered in the related Volkswagen Golf R at 245kW and 420Nm – an increase of 17kW and 20Nm respectively.

The improvement shaves 0.1 seconds from the 0-100km/h sprint time of the S3, down to 4.7s, and is backed by a rear-biased Dynamic Plus drive mode shared with the RS3 that Audi says aims to increase



rear axle oversteer.

When selected, Dynamic Plus also shortens gearshift timing by half, the S3's remapped engine and transmission tune providing higher start-off torque and lower idling speeds (down 200rpm to 1300rpm). There are six driver-selectable modes available.

The model also scores the RS3's rear axle torque splitter to enable variable torque distribution between the left and right wheels.

Other revisions see the 2024 Audi S3 equipped with firmer, lowered suspension, a unique steering map, recalibrated stability control and torque vectoring systems, and larger diameter (357mm) front brake rotors for improved stopping power to go with the extra grunt.

The S3 joins the recently updated Audi A3 in receiving a handful of

exterior design changes including a wider and flatter hexagonal grille, a revised lower bumper treatment over quad exhaust outlets, and newly sculpted rear bumper cover.

Alloy wheel designs are offered in 18- and 19-inch sizes and are now shod with Falken tyres.

The paint palette grows by four colours to include Ascari Blue, Distinct Green, Matte Daytona Grey, and Progressive Red.

On the technology front are driver-selectable daytime running lights paired with Matrix LED headlights, a revised tail-light design, 30-colour interior LED ambient lighting – now extended into the door panels – an optional Sonos premium 3D sound system, an updated gearshift toggle switch and an adaptive cruise control lane change function (as part of the blind-spot monitoring system).

[FULL STORY: CLICK HERE](#)

MERCEDES-BENZ PRICES C200 NIGHT EDITION FOR OZ

By MATT BROGAN

MERCEDES-BENZ has announced details of its limited-edition C200 Night Edition, adding what the German importer says is significant extra equipment and purposeful stance for a compelling price.

Pricing for the Mercedes-Benz C200 Night Edition is listed at \$86,900 plus on-road costs, or \$89,990 drive-away for vehicles ordered between April 12 and June 30, and delivered by July 31.

The stalwart C-Class is enhanced by Night Edition-specific design enhancements in high-gloss black, including the radiator louvre, AMG-style front and rear aprons, beltline trim strip, window frames, and wing mirror housings plus 19-inch AMG five-spoke alloy wheels.

Inside, the C200 Night Edition has a Burmester 3D surround



sound system, and heat and noise-insulating glass for the windscreen and side windows over and above the C200's standard equipment.

Regular C200 equipment includes AMG Line interior and exterior styling enhancements, dashboard lines in anthracite line-structure lime wood trim, an 11.9-inch portrait-oriented infotainment screen, a 12.3-inch instrumentation array, head-up display and a multifunction steering wheel.

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Sixth-gen Toyota 4Runner breaks cover in US with some Australian-developed accessories

By PETER BARNWELL

BREAKING cover in San Diego, California, the sixth-generation Toyota 4Runner SUV looks like a nearly perfect fit as a replacement for the decade-old Toyota Fortuner here in Australia.

Like the Fortuner, the 4Runner is a ute-based wagon, except this one is related to the Toyota Tacoma and therefore destined to be made in left-hand drive for the North American market only.

As the 4Runner rolls off Toyota's Tahara production line in Japan – a

right-hand drive country – rather than a US-based facility and it shares Toyota's TNGA-F platform with the new Prado, LandCruiser 300 and other models destined for Australia there could be a chance that the 4Runner or something like it comes to these shores.

Of interest to Aussies could be the 4Runner's beefiest-yet 243kW/630Nm drivetrain option, a hybrid system that pairs a turbocharged 2.4-litre four-cylinder petrol engine with a 36kW electric motor integrated into the eight-speed



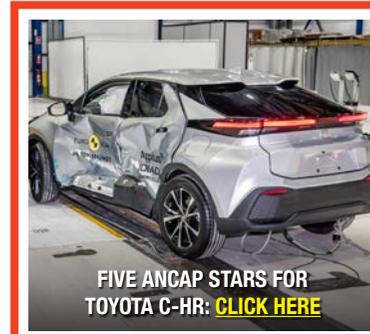
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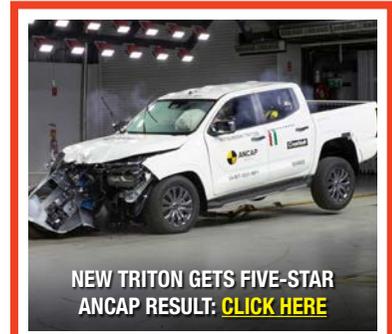
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ANCAP RESULT: [CLICK HERE](#)

transmission and fed by a 1.87kWh NiMH battery pack.

Australian off-road accessory specialist ARB also provides some factory-fit goodies to the high-spec Trailhunter variant in the form of Old Man Emu 2.5-inch forged shocks with rear external piggyback remote reservoirs, along with a uniquely co-

designed ARB roof rack.

Toyota USA says the new 4Runner will hit the North American market in the third quarter of this year and that the model stays true to the original concept as an extremely capable, dynamic, and durable off-roader.

A 40-year history in the US has earned the 4Runner high regard from

owners who prioritise off-road driving.

Said to be new from the ground up – platform sharing notwithstanding – the 4Runner's chassis utilises a high-strength boxed-steel ladder frame and features a multi-link coil rear and double wishbone front suspension.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

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BMW taps Rimac

European battery tech collaboration to challenge Asia's BEV dominance

By MATT BROGAN

BMW and Rimac have agreed to partner on high-voltage electric vehicle battery technology in a European collaboration that aims to challenge Asian dominance in the field.

Rimac, a Croatian electric hypercar manufacturer owned 45 per cent by Porsche, is expanding its reach as a supplier of battery systems and powertrain components to other OEMs, with the aim of producing 100,000 battery units per annum by 2026.

BMW declined to comment specifically on the deal, saying only that the long-term partnership is a sign that Rimac is transitioning from



niche manufacturer to high-volume Tier 1 supplier.

It is understood BMW will release more details about what form the partnership with Rimac will take, as well as its scope and content, at a later stage.

The German brand expects half of its global sales to be full-electric models by the end of the decade. Last year that number reached 15

per cent.

BMW has its own battery research centre in Germany, but has left large-scale development to its partners, placing multi-billion-Euro orders with CATL and EVE Energy to produce cells in both China and Europe.

It is not yet known which BMW models will benefit from the joint venture with Rimac, which is understood to amount to 40,000 units annually.

BMW chief financial officer Walter Mertl said: "The tipping point for the combustion engine was last year (2023)."

[FULL STORY: CLICK HERE](#)



Spanish Chery

Deal nears with Spanish government for Chery to establish its first European production facility

By MATT BROGAN

THE Spanish government says it is nearing a deal with Chinese manufacturer Chery to begin vehicle production in Barcelona, likely at the former Nissan facility that produced Navara and Mercedes-Benz X-Class utes before closing in late 2021.

It is anticipated that the opportunity could create as many as 1600 jobs, while also giving Chery an important European base from which to build and distribute its cars.

According to Spain's Industry Ministry, the agreement will be formalised "within days" following positive talks with Chery. It is not known if any public aid was offered to Chery as part of the negotiation.

Spain will open two tenders this year for companies to request a total of €1.7 billion (\$A2.8b) in loans and grants for electric vehicle production under the PERTE (Strategic Projects for Economic Recovery and Transformation) scheme of incentives that uses European Union pandemic relief funds.

The former Nissan plant in Barcelona was partially handed over to Spanish motorcycle manufacturer Silence and global engineering groups QEV and EV Motors, which planned to turn the facility into a hub for electric vehicle production.

EV Motors acquired full control of the facility in March this year and has played a key role in talks with



Chery because it would operate beneath the hub's umbrella.

Automotive News Europe reports that EV Motors also plans to produce electric pick-ups and vans under its Ebro brand, which could involve potential production and commercial deals with Chery.

[FULL STORY: CLICK HERE](#)

1000km range?



BYD claims new-generation Blade battery tech will offer 1000km BEV driving range

By MATT BROGAN

CHINESE electric vehicle manufacturer BYD is reportedly gearing up to launch its next-generation Blade battery pack this August, with technology offering significant increases in driving range.

According to a report published by *Fast Technology*, BYD is working alongside subsidiary FinDreams to develop a battery pack it says is 25 per cent more efficient than its existing LFP (lithium iron phosphate) technology, without adding significantly to the unit's overall cost.

The new battery packs are reported to offer an energy density of 190Wh/kg – or 40Wh/kg more



than is currently available.

Fast Technology further suggests that BYD may offer a smaller and lighter battery that offers comparable range to its existing models, or a similar-sized battery pack with a driving range of up to 1000km.

At this stage, it is not known which BYD will be first to feature the Blade II battery pack.

BYD's existing Blade battery technology is itself relatively new and offers what the manufacturer says are new levels of safety, durability and performance, as well as increased battery space utilisation.

In most BYD models, the battery forms part of the vehicle chassis, reducing weight and benefiting packaging by as much as 50 per cent (claimed).

The Chinese manufacturer originated as a battery technology company 27 years ago before entering the automotive market and has sold more than three million battery electric vehicles.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

Mission creep



Tesla robotaxi to debut this August, says Musk, but may come instead of cheaper 'Model 2'

By MATT BROGAN

TESLA chief executive Elon Musk has announced the debut of his long-awaited robotaxi, now expected to be unveiled on August 8, but seems to have put the entry-level 'Model 2' battery electric vehicle on the back burner.

First pitched to investors in 2019, the fully autonomous vehicle has long been key to Tesla's high stock market valuation.

Mr Musk's announcement comes just weeks after Tesla announced the latest version of its 'Full Self-Driving' enhanced driver-assistance technology to customers, which is now available as a subscription service rather than a high-priced

optional extra purchased upfront.

Tesla has said that its next-generation vehicle platform will underpin both a cheaper BEV model and the dedicated robotaxi, though the Texas-headquartered company has yet to unveil prototypes of either.

Mr Musk's social media announcement indicates that the robotaxi is taking priority over the cheaper BEV and *Reuters* reports that Tesla has called off plans for its less expensive vehicle, instead shifting resources to production of the robotaxi.

Mr Musk responded by saying the outlet is "lying (again)", without specifying inaccuracies.

The article stated that the



Tesla SolarCity California

inexpensive Tesla, likely badged as the Model 2, has been cancelled in favour of investment in the robotaxi. "Elon's directive is to go all robotaxi," one source told *Reuters*.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

New-look 2008 here



Facelifted petrol-powered 2008 variants arrive in Peugeot showrooms from \$40K

By MATT BROGAN

PEUGEOT Australia has announced details and pricing for petrol-powered variants of its updated 2008 small SUV range, although the battery electric E-2008 that launched Down Under last September continues in pre-facelift guise for now.

Two variants of the updated 2008 will arrive in showrooms imminently, priced from \$39,990 plus on-road costs for the Allure, rising \$1050 compared with the starting point of the outgoing range.

Another \$4500 is asked for the



top GT grade, representing a \$1093 increase over its predecessor.

Peugeot says both 2008 variants reinforce its “commitment to technological innovation and alluring styling”.

With a focus on style, the Peugeot 2008 is sculpted to become more upmarket in appearance, a look the French manufacturer says is elegant, powerful, and alluring.

The refreshed exterior design sports updated three-claw DRLs, a newly sculpted grille – featuring slats colour-coded to the body paint – and tail-lights with a “striking 3D effect”.

Matte black badging, including on the door sill font for GT grades, brings added attention to detail to the updated 2008, the Peugeot logo now found both on the grille and steering wheel.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

T-Cross tech lift



Big-car tech update for VW T-Cross light SUV, in local dealerships from September

By MATT BROGAN

VOLKSWAGEN is set to launch its updated T-Cross light SUV in Australia from September, the model to offer the latest technology from larger and more expensive vehicles across the VW range, including standard Travel Assist and available IQ.Light Matrix adaptive LED headlights.

The T-Cross range will be made available in three model grades – Life, Style, and R-Line – all sporting a sharpened exterior design and more premium interior finishings.

Soft-touch plastics will make their way into every T-Cross grade, while Style and R Line variants will further benefit from leatherette dashboard and door card inlays.

On the tech front, the T-Cross now receives adaptive cruise control with Travel Assist as standard across the range, the semi-autonomous

driver technology adding stop-and-go functionality plus freeway lane centring support across the range.

The T-Cross Life variant gains LED headlights, light assist, side assist, rear cross-traffic alert, park assist, a proactive passenger protection system, and digital instrumentation.



Also fitted are 16-inch Nottingham alloy wheels, front- and lane-assist tech, an 8.0-inch multimedia screen with App-Connect, DAB+ digital radio reception and vision from the reversing camera.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

ALFA MILANO JUNIOR



By MATT BROGAN and
HAITHAM RAZAGUI

ALFA Romeo unveiled its light-segment Milano SUV and was promptly forced to rename it Junior after the original name was deemed misleading and therefore unlawful given production will take place in Poland.

Now available in Europe, the Junior is expected to arrive in Australian showrooms during the second half of 2025. Pricing and local specifications will be announced closer to that time.

The Italian brand’s smallest vehicle since production of the Mito hatch concluded in 2018, the Junior is based on Stellantis sister brand Peugeot’s CMP architecture and will be produced with petrol and battery electric drivetrains.

Similar in size to the Lexus LBX, the Junior will sit beneath the Tonale SUV in Alfa Romeo’s line-up. It shares underpinnings with the Fiat 600e, Jeep Avenger, Peugeot E-2008, and Opel Mokka to name but a few in the Stellantis stable.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

V10_final_final



Lamborghini says *alla prossima* to V10 Huracan with sold-out STJ swansong

By MATT BROGAN

LAMBORGHINI has released its final edition Huracan STJ, with just 10 examples – one for each of its engine’s cylinders – to be produced, all of which are already sold out.

Based on the Huracan STO, the track-focussed STJ (Super Trofeo Jota) features a familiar 5.2-litre V10 powerplant sending 470kW and 565Nm to the rear wheels via a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission.

The model is enhanced with Gran Turismo circuit racing-inspired aerodynamics, including a new rear wing angle and carbon-fibre canards flanking the front fascia. The changes are said to endow the

Huracan STJ with 10 per cent more downforce than the STO.

Bridgestone Potenza race tyres on 20-inch centre-lock alloys and bespoke four-way adjustable dampers help the STJ to be quicker (by a second) than the STO around Lamborghini’s Nardo test circuit, the variant further differentiated by a choice of blue or grey liveries with red and white highlights.

Of course, a limited-edition model would not be complete without its own numbered placard which in the case of the Huracan STJ reads “1 of 10” on the passenger side.

GoAuto understands the Huracan will be replaced by a mid-engine, twin-turbo V8 model with plug-



in hybrid electric assistance – and featuring the Revuelto’s eight-speed dual-clutch transmission – sometime toward the end of 2024.

Lamborghini has not said if the driveline will be related to that found in the Urus SUV.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

Third time a charm



Battista Anniversario and Battista Reversario

Pininfarina is making two Battista Reversario electric hypercars for one Anniversario owner

By MATT BROGAN

AUTOMOBILI Pininfarina has paid tribute to its Battista Anniversario electric hypercar with the launch of two special commission models dubbed Battista Reversario.

Inspired, it says, by the concept of ‘balance’, the Reversario duo are finished in a striking Grigio Antonelliano (grey) and Bianco Sestriere (white) colour scheme that alternates across the respective upper and lower sections of each car.

The body finish is complemented by contrasting Iconica Blue stripes, and on the brake callipers and rear bumper cut-away.

Inside, the theme is mirrored with the Pilota seats upholstered



Battista Reversario

in white Alcantara quilting with contrasting blue.

While the cabin is primarily black including the bespoke anodised chassis plate, there are accents throughout with the cup-holder retainer, the headliner centre bezel, and the seatbelts, all finished in Iconica Blu.

The interior is matched with its own three-piece luggage set.

“Reversario was the ultimate commission,” explained Automobili

Pininfarina chief design officer Dave Amantea.

“Taking inspiration from the original Anniversario, it is a reflection in every aspect, using a timeless combination of colours to create an opposite that works alone and together. This is a vehicle that is the greatest expression of our ‘Dream Cars. Made Real.’ philosophy, to date.”

The Battista Anniversario was launched in 2020 to celebrate the brand’s 90th anniversary. Only five were built – the fifth owned by the person who commissioned the Reversario twins.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)
Vale Paolo Pininfarina – page 19

GoAuto Market Insight
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Ran out of gas

Once billed as an environmental saviour, LPG vehicle sales have fallen to zero in Australia

By MATT BROGAN

TURN the clock back just over a decade and both dual fuel and dedicated liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) vehicles were a commonplace alternative to petrol and diesel.

Adjacent to thriving aftermarket conversion specialists, local vehicle manufacturers were touting the advantages of their own gas models, creating cost-competitive alternatives to emerging technologies, such as petrol-electric hybrid.

But with the demise of local manufacturing, the advent of ridesharing services such as Uber that challenged the big LPG-fuelled taxi fleets and now the shift toward electrification, so too came the decline of LPG.

Also long gone are the days of \$6000 incentives introduced by the Howard government for the switch to LPG; electrified assistance, most notably from Toyota, quickly stepped up to fill the void, and by 2018 there was not a single new vehicle sold Down Under with a red diamond riveted to the number plate.

The lower per-litre price of LPG made it a terrific option for reducing

the running costs of existing powertrain technology – even though it usually resulted in higher per-kilometre consumption – and, as it is produced in abundance in Australia, LPG helped reduce the nation’s reliance on imported fuel.

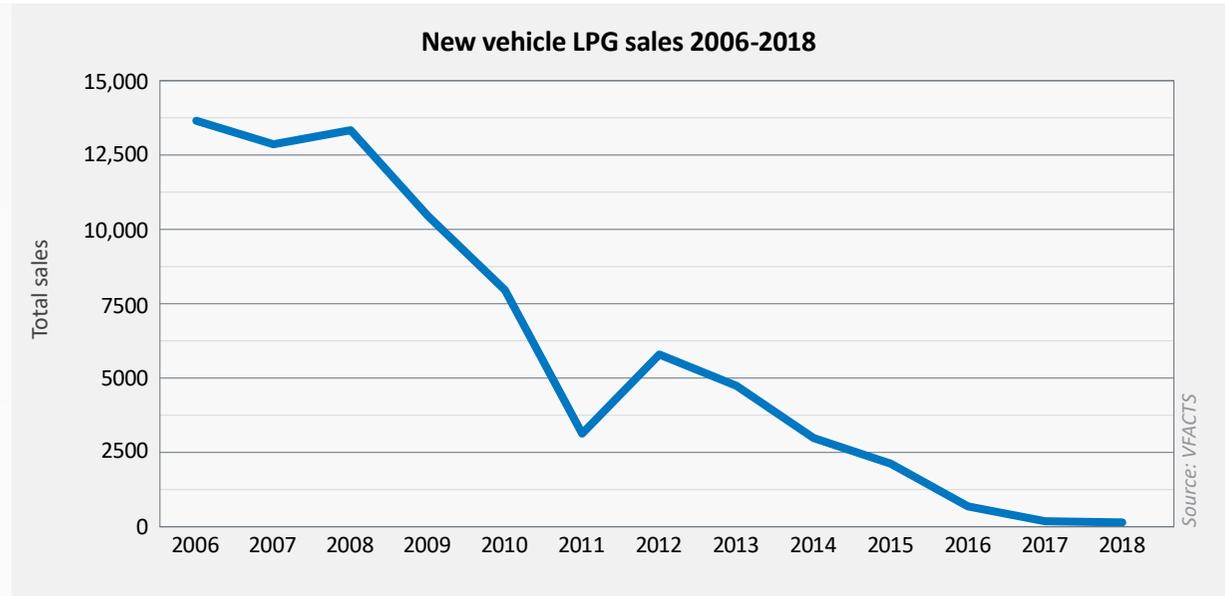
Burning LPG instead of petrol and diesel also helps reduce CO2 and NOx emissions but the numbers show its popularity is dwindling.

In 2013, there were approximately 500,000 LPG-powered vehicles registered Australia-wide. As of last year, that number tallied just 200,000. The decline is one a spokesperson for Climate Change and Energy minister Chris Bowen admits has had its time.

“Automotive LPG demand has fallen in Australia over the past 10 years due, in part, to the transition of large fleets to petrol-hybrid vehicles,” the spokesperson said, acknowledging the related demise of the taxi fleet to rideshare-based alternatives.

“We will continue to monitor the fuel market and work with the fuel industry and energy users to ensure Australia’s fuel security.”

LPG bowzers are slowly



disappearing from service stations across the country. Those reliant on the fuel may find it more difficult to source LPG as electrified alternatives become more commonplace.

“It is a product that has gone out of favour since the government subsidy for LPG conversions stopped,” said Service Station Association

spokesperson Colin Long.

“Ford was producing an LPG Falcon which came onto the market and didn’t take off, and now the big oil company sites are looking at what LPG is bringing to them in terms of sales, and a number have eliminated it as an offer on their forecourts.”

The price of LPG has also

increased significantly. The fuel was once reported as achieving a 30 to 50 per cent saving in running costs when compared with a comparable petrol-powered model. For owners of most older LPG-powered vehicles, that figure no longer stacks up.

[FULL STORY: CLICK HERE](#)

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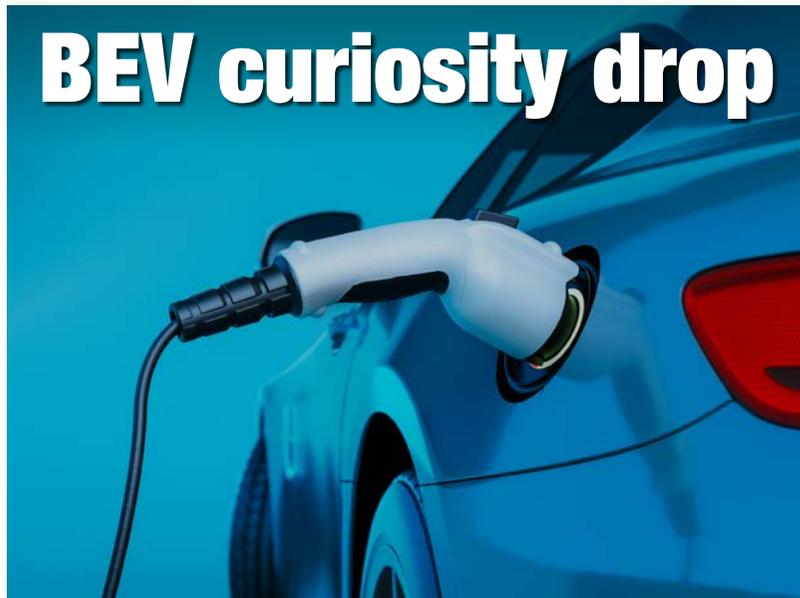


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BEV curiosity drop



Edmunds, JD Power surveys show growing disinterest in BEVs among US car buyers

By MATT BROGAN

THE number of new-car buyers in the United States likely to consider an electric vehicle as their next car is shrinking according to the results of two surveys carried out by Edmunds and JD Power.

Both surveys indicate that despite the dozens of new battery electric vehicle (BEV) models entering the market, buyers in the United States are less likely to consider a BEV than before, with almost a quarter (23 per cent) of Edmunds respondents saying they “dislike” the technology.

Automotive research firm JD Power found similar results in its own survey, with the percentage of consumers who said they are very likely to consider a BEV for their next car falling for the fourth consecutive month.

JD Power says just 24 per cent of respondents would consider buying an electric vehicle, while those who said they would not rose to more than 22 per cent.

According to Cox Automotive, the sentiment underlies dealer struggles across the United States. On average, dealers currently have

114 days’ supply of electric vehicles on their lots.

Edmunds head of automotive insights Jessica Caldwell says the reasons behind the reluctance to purchase a BEV are varied but include price, charging difficulties, and a lack of models from trusted automotive brands.

Of the brands viewed as trustworthy, Ms Caldwell said BMW, Ford, General Motors, Honda, Tesla, and Toyota fared best.

Despite the downturn in consumer sentiment, new BEV registrations are continuing to increase, albeit at a far slower rate.

Registrations of electric vehicles rose 15 per cent in January, a significantly smaller gain when compared with the 52 per cent growth figure posted for the 2023 calendar year. In all, BEVs made up around eight per cent of all US light vehicle registrations in January compared with seven per cent a year earlier.



JD Power survey respondents said limited public charging infrastructure was one of the key reasons behind the lack of support for electric vehicles.

Survey respondents also said the time required to charge, limited driving range, electricity grid concerns, and the inability to charge at their home or office were chief concerns, as was the inability to charge their vehicle during a power outage.

Nearly a quarter of BEV rejectors also cited inadequate vehicle performance in extreme

temperatures as a reason to avoid the switch from petrol or diesel power.

Edmunds’ respondents said price was another factor in delaying a BEV purchase. Almost half of those surveyed said they wanted a BEV priced under \$US40,000 (\$A60,840) while 20 per cent said they wanted a model priced from under \$US30,000 (\$A45,630).

There are currently no new BEVs available in the US market from less than \$US30,000 and just four from less than \$US40,000.

“Most EVs are beyond (buyers’) desired price range,” said Ms Caldwell. “Many of the youngest consumers are the most interested in EVs, but they are unlikely to afford one.”

Around 90 per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds surveyed said they are open to the idea of buying a BEV as their next new car, while 83 per cent of 25- to 34-year-olds said they are interested in buying a BEV.



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Andrew Knock
Chief Technology Officer



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FULVIO FATTORE TO FOCUS ON FLEET AT MITSUBISHI

By PETER BARNWELL
AFTER more than seven years with Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd (MMAL) in various management positions, Fulvio Fattore has been deployed to the position of deputy director of fleet and mobility solutions. In this new role, Mr Fattore's responsibilities will, among other things, lie in fleet procurement, mobility solutions, fleet leasing and management services for businesses of all shapes and sizes.



Fulvio Fattore

driving Mitsubishi fleet sales. With a new-generation Triton utility now on sale in Australia, Mr Fattore's work in the fleet area is considered critical to the model's success. His skillset places him in good stead for the challenges ahead as he has variously been involved in B2B analytics, business development and planning, business strategy, change management and channel account management. Added to this are Mr Fattore's experience in managing customer experience, cross-functional team leadership and more.

Mr Fattore has been at the fleet coal face for a number of years already and has been instrumental in establishing business relationships with outside providers, as well as

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

PAOLO PININFARINA PASSES AWAY AT THE AGE OF 65

By PETER BARNWELL
PAOLO Pininfarina, chair of the legendary Italian automotive design house bearing his name, passed away last week after a long illness at the age of 65.



Paolo Pininfarina

name to Pininfarina in 1961. Paolo's career in the automotive world was pre-destined through the influence of his father and grandfather who took pains to steer him in the "right" direction from a young age.

He was the son of Sergio and grandson of Battista "Pinin" Farina – who created the business and changed the Farina family

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

ACCC AGRICULTURE GROUP APPOINTS MCKENNA

By PETER BARNWELL
VICTORIAN Automotive Chamber of Commerce (VACC) industry policy advisor and Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA) official Michael McKenna has been appointed to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) as member of the consumer group's Agriculture Consultative Committee.



Michael McKenna

Members of VACC's Farm and Industrial Machinery Dealers Association (FIMDA) were last week advised that Mr McKenna had been appointed by the ACCC as the Farm and Industrial Machinery Dealers Association of Australia (FIMDAA) delegate on the ACCC's Agriculture Consultative Committee (AgCC).

The appointment comes under the umbrella of the FIMDAA national

sector group, which is the peak body representing farm and industrial machinery dealers in Australia.

FIMDAA is a national industry sector group under the banner of the Motor Trades Association of Australia (MTAA).

Mr McKenna's appointment is the first occasion an organisation from automotive retail has been on the AgCC. It is seen as a key moment in the reinvigoration of FIMDAA under the management of newly appointed MTAA CEO Matt Hobbs.

The AgCC was established by the ACCC to provide advice and information on issues identified as affecting the Australian agricultural sector under the Competition and Consumer Act.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

VALE BEV BROCK OAM

By PETER BARNWELL
BEVERLEY (Bev) Brock OAM has passed away at the age of 77, two years after being diagnosed with cancer.



She was for nearly thirty years the partner of the late legendary motor racing champion Peter Brock, separating from him in 2005 – a year before his untimely death in a race crash and later becoming involved in a bitter legal battle over his estate.

Bev was considered to have been integral to Peter Brock's racing success through the 1970s and 80s and was a constant presence in the pits at all his races and behind-the-scenes organising.

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Rumour confirmed

After months of speculation, Kia has officially named its dual-cab ute entrant the Tasman

By MATT BROGAN
KIA has confirmed the name of its highly anticipated ute will be Tasman, making it the first Kia product with a name analogous to Australia, further cementing, it says, its status as the Korean brand's most Australian model yet.

Selected from a pool of names sourced from Kia's global markets, 'Tasman' was initially proposed by



Kia Australia and ultimately chosen for its connection to the Tasman Sea and Dutch seafarer Abel Tasman, the first European to discover the rugged landscapes of Tasmania.

Each of these elements lends itself to a spirit of enduring toughness, grit, and resilience, reflecting the rugged character and matching capabilities of the Kia Tasman, the company said.

"The team at Kia Australia has been working closely with the Research and Development team at headquarters to develop Tasman, a vehicle we believe will meet the needs of our unique market, so it's very rewarding that it has been granted an Australian-inspired name befitting its personality," said

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- BMW X2 and iX2
- 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



Second-gen premium compact coupes-SUVs in turbo-petrol and battery electric formats, the latter limbo-ing Luxury Car Tax for maximum novated lease impact. All- and front-wheel drive available. Tech overhaul includes BMW OS 9.0 running on a curved digital dash. M performance upgrades offered range-wide.

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Kia Australia chief executive officer Damien Meredith.

"We have strong ambitions for Tasman in our market, and the fact that its name has such distinct links to our region is evidence of Kia Australia's instrumental role in its development and future success."

Kia says the Tasman represents its bold first step into the ute market, the model designed with a range of work, trade, and leisure pursuits in mind. It is already taking

expressions of interest in the model via its public website and says it expects the model to be released locally sometime in 2025.

It was recently reported that Kia would initially offer only four-cylinder turbo-diesel power in its forthcoming Tasman utility, *The Korean Car Blog* stating that the dual-cab model will launch with a four-cylinder turbocharged diesel unit, likely the carryover Hyundai/Kia 2.2-litre R Series unit found in

offerings including the Kia Sorento.

Assuming that is the case, the body-on-frame Kia Tasman will offer 148kW of power and 440Nm of torque, ranking it beneath the likes of the Ford Ranger/Volkswagen Amarok (154kW/500Nm), Isuzu D-Max/Mazda BT-50 and Nissan Navara (140kW/450Nm), Mitsubishi Triton (150kW/470Nm), and Toyota HiLux (150kW/500Nm).

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THE BUSINESS PAGES OF GOAUTONEWS

Penske buys AU dealerships

Potential game-changer as Penske Automotive Group expands into auto retail in Australia



Porsche Centre Brighton

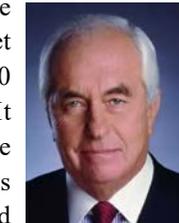
By JOHN MELLOR
PENSKE Automotive Group (PAG), one of America's largest dealer groups, has purchased two Porsche dealerships and a Ducati dealership in Melbourne in what appears to be a first step into further automotive dealer ownership in Australia.

Listed on the New York Stock Exchange, PAG is a Fortune 500 company with a market capitalisation of \$US10 billion (A\$15 billion). It employs 28,000 people worldwide. PAG operates dealerships in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Italy, and Japan and is one of the largest retailers of commercial trucks in North America for Freightliner.

The company said in a statement to the New York exchange that it has signed an agreement to acquire Porsche Centre Brighton, Porsche Centre Doncaster and Ducati at Essendon Fields.

It said: "The Brighton dealership,

which is located approximately 20 minutes from central Melbourne, opened in March 2009 and has been serving the Porsche community in Melbourne for nearly 15 years. The Doncaster dealership is the newest official Porsche Centre located in the high-growth northeast Melbourne suburbs."



Roger Penske

Porsche has 14 Porsche Centres in Australia.

The dealerships were purchased from the Preston Motors Group.

GoAutoNews Premium has been told that these dealerships are now the last to be divested by Preston Motors which in recent years has been steadily selling off its retail businesses. This occurred in the wake of division within the Auswild family owners of PMG that went all the way to the High Court.

The Porsche/Ducati sale to Penske Automotive Group was assisted by the automotive group within HWL Ebsworth lawyers.

Continued next page

Accessories risk in NVES

AAAA CEO highlights unintended consequences of accessories in NVES policy

Benchmark dealers show the way

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Porsche Centre Doncaster

Continued from previous page
 PAG is a diversified international transportation services company and one of the world's premier automotive and commercial truck retailers with operations across four continents and nine countries.

In an announcement made to the NYSE the company said it intends to "expand its retail automotive operations into Australia" by acquiring the two Porsche dealerships along with the Ducati motorcycle dealership in Melbourne.

Penske has been operating in Australia and New Zealand for about a decade through leading on- and off-highway businesses, including

Penske Australia, Penske New Zealand, and Penske Truck Rental.

In Australasia it distributes commercial vehicles from Western Star Trucks, MAN Truck & Bus, and Dennis Eagle, as well as diesel engines, petrol engines, and power systems from MTU, Detroit, Allison Transmission (AU only), DEUTZ, and Sauer Compressors (AU only) with related parts and service support.

It also offers extensive truck rental and leasing services.

The move into auto retail by the Penske interests has the potential to heat up the Australian dealership acquisition market by providing



Randall Seymore

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*Source: Nielsen Digital Content Planning, Nov 2020– Aug 2021, P2+, Digital (C/M), Text, Gumtree Cars, Autotrader, CarsGuide – Total De-Duplicated Unique Audience = 3.1 million UA average per month.

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competition to the likes of Eagers Automotive and other aspiring dealer groups that are on the acquisition trail in Australia as many dealership families who built up their brand portfolios from the 1960s seek an exit from the industry.

If PAG's purchase of UK dealerships over the past two decades is anything to go by, Roger Penske is showing a strong appetite for dealerships in markets like Australia.

For example, PAG bought the

UK's Sytner Group in 2002 for \$A200 million. These days Sytner employs almost 10,000 people across 150 plus dealerships and showcases 23 brands.

Sytner Group, including CarShop and the Agnew Group, is one of the largest automotive retailers in the United Kingdom representing some of the world's most luxurious brands. Sytner Group and CarShop operate solely in the UK with Agnew Group operating in Northern Ireland.

Brands include Alpina, AMG, Aston Martin, Audi, Bentley, BMW, BMW Motorrad, Bugatti, Ferrari, Jaguar, Land Rover, Lamborghini, Maserati, McLaren, Mercedes-Benz, Mini, Pagani, Porsche, Rolls Royce, SEAT, Skoda, Smart, Volkswagen and Volvo.

Last year PAG and an associate financier went into battle to take over Pentagon which has 160 retail locations across the UK, most of which are new-vehicle dealerships.

Continued next page



Ducati West Melbourne

Continued from previous page

It was up against bidding from US retailer Lithia Motors and another from AutoNation. Lithia won that battle with a price tag of \$A760 million.

But that did not stop PAG. Earlier this year the Penske Automotive Group said it completed its acquisition of the Rybrook Group in the UK with 15 premium-brand dealerships that generate about \$A1.5 billion in annual revenue.

Commenting on the Melbourne acquisition, Penske Automotive Group head of international operations Randall Seymore said: “We are delighted to announce this transaction and expand our partnership with the Porsche brand.

“For over ten years we have strategically built a diverse commercial vehicle and power systems business that operates across Australia and New Zealand based on our commitment to strong customer service.

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

The acquisition is expected to close in the second quarter of 2024, subject to customary conditions.

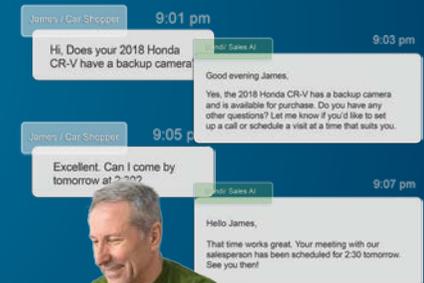
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BOOK A DEMO

Accessories risk in NVES



AAAA CEO highlights unintended consequences of accessories in NVES policy

By MATT BROGAN

THE chief executive officer of the Australian Automotive Aftermarket Association Stuart Charity has welcomed the government's relaxed CO2 emission regulations for four-wheel drive SUV and light commercial vehicles but he warned that it was important that the New Vehicle Efficiency Standard (NVES) was implemented in a manner that allowed both OEMs and aftermarket providers ample opportunity to change tack.



Stuart Charity

Speaking with *GoAutoNews Premium* at the Australian Auto Aftermarket Expo in Melbourne last week, Mr Charity was discussing the effect the NVES might have on aftermarket accessories sales which typically can run to \$10,000 to

\$20,000 per vehicle, especially on utes and SUVs.

Mr Charity said the implementation of the 4WD Innovation Zone at this year's Expo was testament to the growing number of accessory suppliers working to develop products for the Australian market – and beyond.

Some 2100 four-wheel drive accessory and part suppliers operate in Australia, with several now having successfully expanded into international markets.

Mr Charity said that with stricter NVES rules comes the very real likelihood that development of such products would be forced to cease, creating consequences that may not previously have been considered.

“We are of the view – and we

have backed this up with our own Innovation Centre – that cars, particularly four-wheel drive SUVs and light commercial utilities, are still going to have to be modified to suit Australian conditions, irrespective of what the powertrain is,” he said.

“However, we need to understand the technology, and what the limitations are. From an innovation perspective, we need to come up with a means of being able to safely and

effectively modify those vehicles.

“I think the biggest concern among those we represent, at least from a short-term perspective, is that if the government goes too hard on this (NVES) too early, then the rate at which change and innovation will be able to keep pace will fall away.

“Car companies and accessory developers cannot change their line-ups, or their powertrains, at the click of a finger,” he said.

“By introducing strong NVES

rules too early, we will see a kind of freeze on new car sales – people will hold on to their older cars a lot longer.

“That has the exact opposite effect of what the government is trying to achieve ... and we have seen that already in various countries, including New Zealand and the United States, where they are rolling back some of their emissions standards in recent times.”



We are dealer driven



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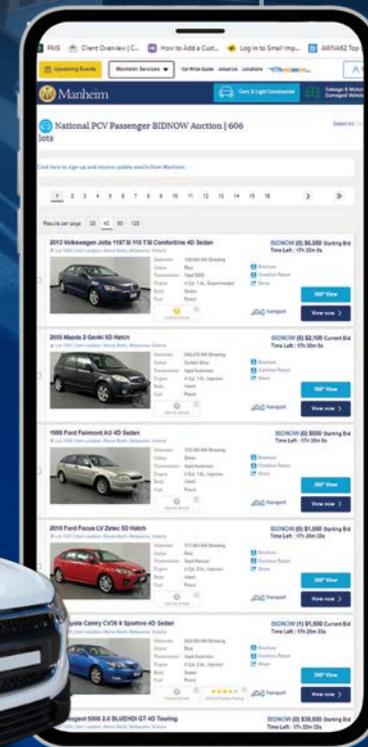
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Autotrader Group gets record dealer leads

Gumtree Group



Customer leads to dealers from Gumtree Cars, CarsGuide and Autotrader jump 10pc

By JOHN MELLOR

AUTOTRADER Group is reporting a strong start to the year which has seen the number of customer leads flowing to dealers grow to record levels.

Director of motors at Gumtree Group, Benn Sykes said the results reflected the group's increased strategic investment and a focus on attracting "the right type of buyer" to its platforms across Gumtree Cars, CarsGuide and Autotrader.

He said the group has made a multimillion-dollar investment in technology designed to smooth the user experience across its websites plus an investment in marketing aimed at driving further growth in the Autotrader Group dealership offering.

Mr Sykes said CarsGuide finished 2023 as Australia's number one

platform for auto editorial and that 2024 has seen "solid growth thanks to our commitment to the consumer and helping them navigate that buying process with confidence".

"January 2024 was a record month with a 10 per cent jump year-on-year in dealer leads, while year-to-date we are up three per cent.

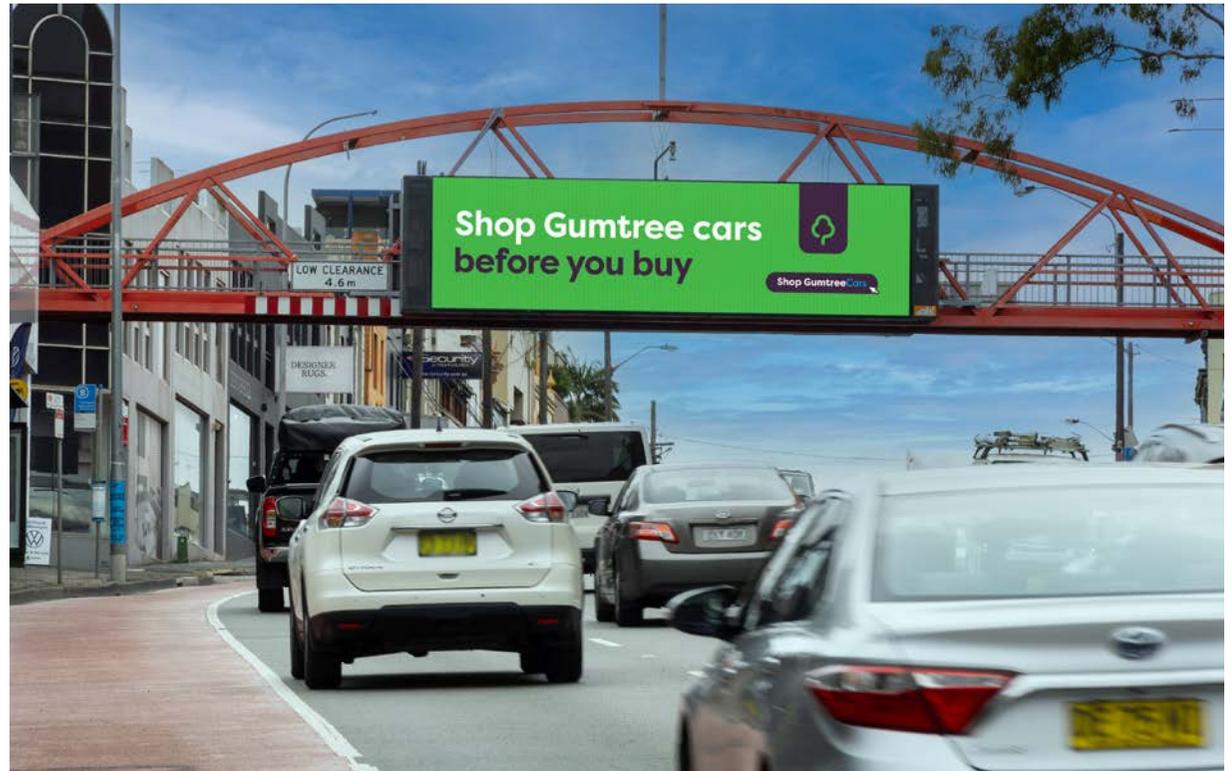
"These strong results reflect the investment across the business to upgrade our systems, deliver a better user experience and lift brand awareness; giving us a better audience than we have ever had.

"With more committed buyers coming through the door we are delivering on our goals to restore Autotrader Group to be the platform of choice for our dealer partners."

Mr Sykes said the business is committed to continuing its focus on



Benn Sykes



strengthening dealership and partner collaboration.

"We have no plans to slow our momentum. We have ambitious goals and these record numbers show that we are on the right path in delivering to both our consumers and dealer partners."

In February Gumtree Australia embarked on a seven-figure outdoor advertising campaign designed to reset the brand in the minds of Australian shoppers.

The Shop Gumtree campaign told consumers that not only should they shop with Gumtree but should choose Gumtree first "whether buying a car or a bed". Gumtree Group incorporates

the trio of online auto sites: Gumtree Cars, CarsGuide and Autotrader.

The national brand campaign was displayed on nearly two hundred and fifty large format outdoor advertising sites and on more than 1300 bus shelters across Australia.

Australian-owned and operated Gumtree Group connects people through more than two-million live listings. It reaches more than six-million people a month and generates more than \$3 billion in monthly gross listing volume. On the automotive side, it comprises Gumtree Cars, CarsGuide and Autotrader.

Last November the company announced ambitious plans to not only

restore its automotive properties to what its owners think is their rightful place in the market but to move to the point where it is the first choice of dealers to advertise their cars.

The strategy was to make the group's three website brands the go-to places for car buyers, who are then directed to dealers' cars for sale.

The company believes that its three-pronged online approach casts a superior catchment net than a single website can achieve, with car buyers being drawn into any one of the sites with different needs and from different directions.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)



Benchmark dealers show the way

MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

As profit levels start slipping away, benchmark dealers hold their ground...

By JOHN MELLOR
ONE of the unheralded features of the retail motor industry in the COVID-19 years was that ‘Average’ dealers came close to matching the business performance of ‘Benchmark’ dealers, according to Profit Focus data from Deloitte’s Motor Industry Service group – most of the industry seemed to share in the spoils of the positive market climate during that period.

But as the industry returns to something approaching the business conditions in place prior to 2020, ‘Average’ dealers are seeing their vehicle margins slipping and rising costs biting, as they appear to be

heading once again into the tough market conditions evident in the years leading up to the pandemic.

According to Deloitte Motor Industry Services lead partner Lee Peters, these dealers should be looking at the best practices of the top-performing dealers in order to insulate themselves from these margin and cost pressures – reigniting their pursuit of benchmark performance.

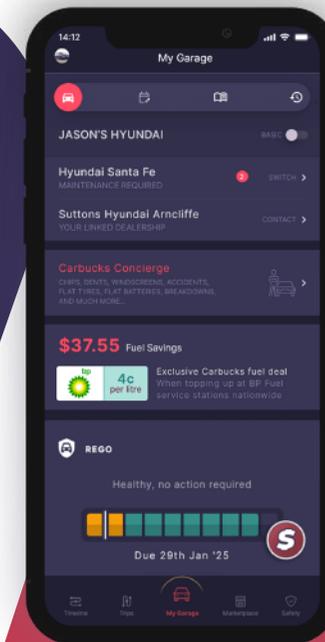


Lee Peters

Mr Peters said that ‘Benchmark’ dealers (the top 30 per cent of dealers in terms of business performance) are showing greater resilience in the face of rising stock levels, weakening margins and rising costs, whereas the ‘Net Profit on Sales’

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levels across ‘Average’ dealers is starting to fall away.

“The ‘Benchmark’ dealers have used the recent period of strong profits and high cash flow to focus on doing things differently and setting themselves up for sustained success.”

“They are not just riding up and down the waves of a new-vehicle led, COVID-affected market. The ‘Benchmark’ dealers are not just letting the market dictate the way they operate. They have used the really

profitable period to try to come out the other side as a different business.

“They have maybe restructured their business operations, re-set their human capital levels, designed a new process, doubled-down on the customer experience, introduced technology solutions to tackle the retention challenge, invested in training, reviewed their value chain connection, or something similar.

Mr Peters said that during the period of COVID-affected stock

shortages, the ‘Average’ dealer that was driven by high vehicle margins due to stock scarcity, achieved levels of ‘Net Profit on Sales’ that were approaching those of the benchmark dealers.

“In the good period, everyone benefited. And there wasn’t much of a difference between the ‘Average’ and the ‘Benchmark’ levels of performance, because everyone was enjoying the spoils.

Continued next page

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“But in the past 12 months, the two ‘groups’ of dealers (‘Average’ and ‘Benchmark’) have pulled far apart and now, over recent months, the ‘Benchmark’ dealers are really achieving very different levels of profit – now back close to two and half times that of the ‘Average’ dealer.

Mr Peters was speaking to *GoAutoNews Premium* on the back of the recent Deloitte Profit Focus annual Industry Overview webinar, which was called Reigniting the Pursuit of Benchmark Performance, to encourage the industry to focus on what matters most to help dealers improve their profitability.

He said the best dealers achieved 7.5 per cent ‘Net Profit on Sales’ during parts of 2022 and were still doing over 6.5 per cent during the back-half of 2023. However, the ‘Average’ dealers who achieved over five per cent in 2020 and were still doing over four per cent during 2021 and 2022, are already back down to 2.5 per cent.

“2.5 percent is still a great number, and we must remember that – in the pre-COVID period, we had only ever seen the industry hit 2.5 per cent as an ‘Average’ once before across 25 years of Deloitte capturing Profit Focus data.”

Mr Peters said that despite 2.5 per cent remaining a strong profit level for the ‘Average’ dealer, “the trends that we are seeing across many key indicators are pre-emptive signs that

Key Take-Aways
Things Benchmark dealers are doing

Top Down

- Retention**
Intense focus on retention, to reduce operating costs and maintain high gross levels across your business
- Value Chain**
Increase finance penetration, and optimise the sales process – customer lifecycle is the key here, and a focus on the Value Chain will set-up a sustainable business
- Service Capacity**
Grow the capacity of service departments, to maximise opportunity in the back-end

Bottom Up

- Expense Management**
Proactively optimise cost bases through expense management practices – celebrate cost optimisation wins
- Embrace Technology**
Invest in CRM and communication technology to efficiently engage with all types of customers – future gains will be achieved via leveraging digital solutions
- Productivity**
Focus on asset productivity (including people) – doing more with less (GP v SGP)

On, Not In

- Control the Controllables**
Focus on the controllables – as the new vehicle market shifts (EVs, new entrants, supply challenges, etc.), focus on the things you can control
- Business Planning**
Build a 5-year Business Plan – look around the corner, combine short and long-term goals, and become agile to market changes
- Employer of Choice**
Continue to invest in the development of people, and build engaging career pathways (become an EC2)

we might be entering a challenging period for the next couple of years, as margins decline and costs rise”.

“Over 80 per cent of the improvement in an ‘Average’ dealers whole-of-business ‘Selling Gross’ pool over the past few years has purely been from ‘New Car Gross’ increases.

“And it is now almost 40 per cent more expensive to open the doors every day than it was in 2019.

“So, as gross margin levels normalise, and fixed costs reach levels we haven’t seen before, we need to make sure we are a different business than we used to be – a more well-rounded business, maximising all parts of our operations.

“That’s why we are trying to make sure that dealers are looking at what the core elements and key differentiators are for those 6.5 per cent ‘Benchmark’ dealers, and making sure they don’t just ride the wave of the ups and downs of the market.

“We are entering a period where the gap between the top 30 per cent and

the bottom 30 per cent of performing dealers will be bigger and more consequential than ever before.”

Mr Peters said that the top attribute of ‘Benchmark’ dealers is that they put the customer at the centre of everything they do.

“‘Benchmark’ dealers are working extremely hard at all elements of customer retention. This starts with the experience they are providing their customers every single day and at every single interaction. They are selling from within their database. Their CRM platform and process is top-notch. And they actively bring their customers along for an enjoyable experience across all elements of their value chain.

“This means they’re getting more trade-ins, doing better finance penetration, have strong service retention, and giving themselves the best chance for their customers to come back to their dealership. They are also incorporating technology into their solutions, and using this

Benchmark profitability remains at historically high levels
Net Profit as a Percentage of Sales



to eliminate some costs from their businesses.

“But to be able to do all of that, of course, there’s a human element – and this is where ‘Benchmark’ dealers really differentiate themselves. They focus on being an employer of choice, attracting top talent, retaining them, training them, and giving their people meaningful careers – and if they achieve this, then they have a better chance at looking after their customers,” he said.

“Interestingly, the data shows that if dealers get this right, their people are able to grow into high performers over time. This means that they are more productive, deliver better results, and in turn, are then getting paid more because they’re doing more.

“Therefore they’re more likely to stay in their role and be retained, and then the whole cycle moves in a positive direction, and the dealership is able to deliver stronger profit levels as a result.”

Asked to identify the main source

of the fixed cost increases, Mr Peters said: “Headcount levels and salaries are a big part of it. Rent, of course, is a huge part of the overall increase. And with rates rising over the last few years, interest expense levels have increased significantly also.”

He said that at an operational level, floorplan expenses are well up.

“Stock levels have now returned for most brands. We are back to close to three months’ worth of stock for many dealers across the industry. So we have vehicle inventory on hand at high interest levels, whereas pre-COVID, we also had high inventory levels but at low interest rates.”

However, Mr Peters was adamant that “there is still a lot of money to be made in 2024 and beyond”.

“There’s a lot of dealers who are doing great work, and posting amazing financial results. For others, we want to reignite the pursuit of that benchmark performance,” he said.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)



Ranger remains top-selling used vehicle as Toyota holds five of top-10 sellers

By JOHN MELLOR

CONTINUED strength in new car sales volumes has improved the supply of used cars and this is leading to more choice and improved affordability, according to the latest Automotive Insights Report (AIR) for March released by the Australian Automotive Dealer Association (AADA) and AutoGrab.

Commenting on the report, AADA CEO James Voortman said: “Australia has posted an impressive used car sales result for the month of March despite the disruption in trade brought on by the Easter holidays. Consumers are in a good position to shop around and negotiate a good price for a used car.”

The report showed that 287,620

vehicles were listed for sale in March and of those, 184,054 used cars sold.

“This is a very impressive result considering the number of trading days lost through weekends and public holidays,” Mr Voortman said.

Used petrol vehicles sales dominated at just short of 118,000 for the month, diesel 58,000, hybrids 6365, BEVs 1400, LPG 268 and PHEV 147.

Mr Voortman said: “The used market for electric vehicles is gradually emerging with strong growth in the number of listings and cars sold. Sales of EVs grew by an impressive 13.1 per cent while PHEVs grew by 8.9 per cent.

“Customers in the market for a used EV have plenty of bargaining power as the number of listed vehicles is well above the number being sold.



James Voortman

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“The average time to sell a used car (at 44 days) is now the lowest it has been for 12 months which tells us that sellers are becoming more pragmatic and buyers are taking advantage of lower prices of used cars,” Mr Voortman said.

“Amid all the talk of fuel efficiency standards in recent months, this data underscores the resilience of the ute market. Utes aged 2-4 years were the only category which did not see

a reduction in retained value and the likes of the Ranger, HiLux and Triton experienced significant increases in sales from the previous month,” he said.

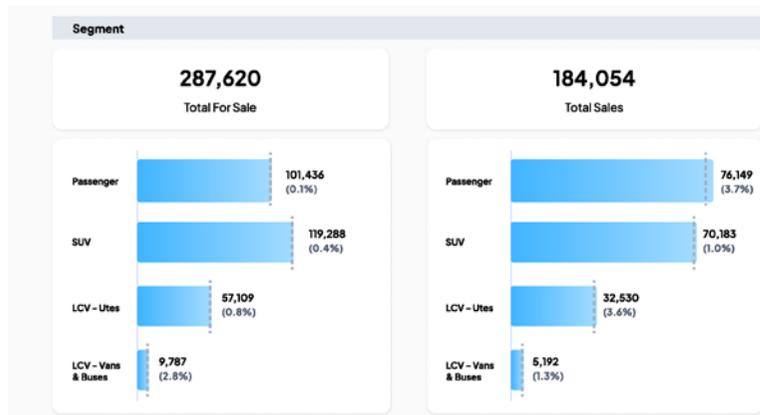
“While retained values continue to trend downwards, the cars which are holding their value the best are smaller used cars such as the Toyota Yaris, the Honda Jazz and the Mazda 2 which are all highly sought after by Australians.

“The Ford Ranger remains

Australia’s best-selling used car, while Australia’s love affair with Toyota is demonstrated by the fact that it makes up five of the top ten used cars sold in March,” Mr Voortman said.

AutoGrab COO Saxon Odgers said: “March was another strong month for Australia’s used car market. While prices of used cars eased slightly, pleasingly the average days to sell remained steady at a low point for the past 12 months at 44 days.

Continued next page



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 “We have seen several manufacturers recently reduce the prices of their new cars, with this flowing through to pricing in the second hand market.

“EV sales grew at more than 13 per cent which is substantially higher than petrol, diesel and hybrid vehicles. EVs still make up less than one per cent of the used car market, with Australians continuing to prefer Ranger, HiLux and Corolla,” Mr Odgers said.



Saxon Odgers

Highlights from the AIR for March were:

- 287,620 vehicles are listed for sale, a slight increase of 0.5 per cent compared to the previous month
- Western Australia led the nation with increased listings of 5.6 per cent while the Northern Territory saw a reduction in listings of 6.7 per cent
- 184,054 used cars were sold in March, an increase of 2.6 per cent from the previous month

- New South Wales saw by far the biggest monthly increase in sales of 7.1 per cent while sales in the Northern Territory declined by 6.2 per cent

• The used market for electric vehicles is slowly emerging with strong growth in the number of listings and cars sold

• Sales of EVs grew by an impressive 13.1 per cent while PHEVs grew by 8.9 per cent

- Average time to sell a used car is 44.2 days, the lowest it has been for 12 months
- Retained values continue their gradual decline with passenger vehicles holding their value best for vehicles in the 2-4 year age bracket (85.1 per cent) while utes perform best for the older 5-7 year category (71.3 per cent)
- The Ford Ranger remains Australia’s best-selling used car, followed by the Toyota HiLux.

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Truck sales just fall short of Q1 2023 record

While trucks slowed in March off the back of strong start in 2024, vans took off

By COBEY BARTELS

THE Australian truck market cooled in March, following record results across both January and February. The industry ended quarter one just shy of the sales record set last year with 4501 trucks delivered in Q1.

Truck Industry Council (TIC) reported year-to-date sales are down just 1.1 per cent, closely shadowing the record results seen in 2023, with a total of 10,344 trucks and vans sold in quarter one – just 114 trucks short of last year’s record first quarter result.

While down slightly on the sales boom experienced in 2023, the first quarter result is still the second strongest ever for the heavy vehicle market in Australia with heavy-duty truck and light-duty van segments

setting new records.

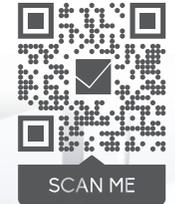
“The first three months of 2024 have brought near record new truck sales in Australia, with new sales records being set in both the heavy-duty truck and the light-duty van segments,” said TIC chief executive Tony McMullan.

Heavy-duty truck sales continue to soar with a total of 1533 units delivered in March, up 5.9 per cent on the same month last year, with a record 3788 units sold across the first quarter of this year.

The medium-duty segment continues to lag behind its heavy-duty counterpart, but saw growth across the first quarter with a total of 1741 sales – up nine per cent on 2023.

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NSW State Government urged to make budget allocation for auto skills and EV uptake

By PETER BARNWELL

THE Motor Traders' Association of NSW (MTA NSW) has warned the NSW state government that “the 2024/25 state budget must address skills shortage and EV incentivisation or risk further crippling the automotive industry”.

With the NSW state government budget in sight (scheduled in June), the MTA NSW has provided the state government with a comprehensive “wish list” to make budgetary allocations in the 2024/25 budget aimed at supporting the evolving needs of the state’s automotive industry and accelerating the transition to EVs.

In a statement, the MTA said: “MTA NSW is urging the state government to help close the skills gap by funding automotive training

opportunities and developing pathways for workers to transition into the automotive industry.”

The industry advocate is further calling for increased access to electric vehicle (EV) training for small and medium-sized businesses, and the removal of stamp duty on EVs to help the state reach its EV target.



Stavros Yallouridis

The thrust of the MTA’s efforts is in three main areas: workforce development, consumer incentives for EVs, and infrastructure expansion. The industry advocate is urging the state government to address the automotive sector’s crippling skills shortage and expedite the upskilling of the automotive workforce to support increased adoption of EVs throughout the state.

It says the impending shift towards EVs presents both opportunities

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and challenges for the automotive landscape. Recent trends indicate a rising demand for EVs Australia-wide, with EVs and hybrid vehicles accounting for a record 23.5 per cent of new vehicle sales in March 2024.

“However, this transition poses significant challenges for the automotive sector, the majority of which are small and often family-owned businesses that don’t have the time or resources to invest in upskilling.

“Recognising the importance

of equipping the workforce with essential skills, the association stresses the need for comprehensive training in EV technology to ensure safety and proficiency as these vehicles become more common,” MTA NSW said in a statement.

CEO of MTA NSW Stavros Yallouridis said: “The automotive industry is at a critical point where we must transition towards a future dominated by electric vehicles. To navigate this shift successfully, MTA NSW is urging the state government

to invest in training programs and infrastructure development that will benefit consumers, automotive businesses, and their staff.”

In addition to greater access to EV training, MTA NSW is advocating for the reinstatement of rebates on the purchase of electric and zero-emission vehicles, the removal of stamp duty on new EVs, and funding for an expanded network of electric charging stations statewide.

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Motorcycle sales dip continues

Quarter one motorcycles sales down on 2023, as cost-of-living pressures hit

By COBEY BARTELS

AFTER motorcycle sales declined across 2023 and returned to pre-pandemic levels, the first quarter of 2024 has seen a further contraction of the market in the face of cost-of-living pressures.

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FAI) has reported that a total of 19,903 motorcycles and off-highway vehicles (OHVs) were sold between January and March, representing an 11 per cent decrease compared with the same period in 2023.

While the motorcycle market was thought to have stabilised last year, with a total of 95,980 motorcycles and OHVs sold, Australians continue to tighten their purse strings as the



Tony Weber

cash rate sits at 4.35 per cent with no indication of dropping.

Road motorcycles made up 41.3 per cent of first-quarter sales with 8217 units delivered, down 10.2 per cent on the same period last year.

Off-road motorcycles saw an even greater first-quarter dip, now accounting for 36.5 per cent of total sales with 7260 units delivered, down 11.9 per cent on 2023.

It was a similar story for OHVs, down 16.1 per cent across quarter one compared with the same period last year at 2976 sales, now accounting for 15 per cent of total sales.

Passion purchases like motorcycles and recreational OHVs appear low on the list of must-haves for Australians right now, but



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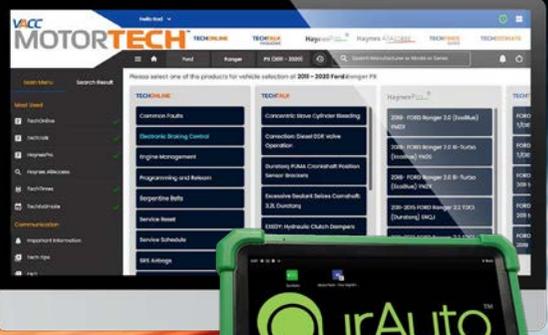
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increasing scooter sales indicate a shift towards more economical transport solutions.

The scooter market is the only segment that grew across the first quarter, up 1.1 per cent with 1450 sales, now representing 7.3 of total motorcycle and OHV sales in Australia.

FCAI chief executive Tony Weber says the decline in total market sales is consistent with cost-of-living and rising interest rate

pressures in Australia.

“As Australians manage tighter finances, recreational products such as motorcycles are often the first to be affected,” he said.

Mr Weber confirmed the rise in scooter sales may also be a result of cost-of-living pressures as Australians look to cheaper, more efficient forms of mobility.

“The continued growth in scooter sales highlights a change in preferences in the Australian market

and consumers shifting to mobility options that offer easier parking, quicker commute times and reduced fuel costs,” he said.

Footnote: While unlikely to make up a significant amount of “missing” sales volume, CFMOTO, Kymco, Landboss and Sherco are not included in FCAI data as they are not members of the industry association.

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)



‘Driving Forward Together’ expo returns to Melbourne for the first time since the pandemic

By NEIL DOWLING and JOHN MELLOR

THE Australian Automotive Dealer Association (AADA) has confirmed it will hold its 2024 convention and expo at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre on July 24-25.

This year’s theme, ‘Driving Forward Together’, will highlight the emerging challenges and opportunities within the dynamic online commercial landscape and the regulatory challenges around vehicle emissions.

The AADA program will also focus on the impending transformative shifts in the franchised new car dealership sector and their pivotal role in car distribution.

The 2024 AADA Convention and Expo program promises to tackle these evolving dynamics and provide attendees with thought-provoking discussions and practical solutions to navigate this changing terrain.

AADA CEO James Voortman said: “We are really looking forward to the AADA Convention and Expo



Jeff Kennett



Ren Blanning



Brooke Hanson



Tom Gleeson

returning to Melbourne for the first time since the pandemic.

“Our industry is facing many challenges, so we will be developing a program which assists dealers to do what they do best, which is turning challenges into opportunities.

Convention director Patrick Tessier OAM said: “We are optimistic that this event will act as a significant platform for industry leaders and stakeholders to assemble, engage in meaningful discussions,

and collectively navigate the future trajectory of our industry.”

The finalised program so far features a keynote address at the opening Auto-IT breakfast by the **Hon Jeff Kennett** – former premier of Victoria and founding chair of Beyond Blue.

Known for his unwavering passion and visionary leadership, Mr Kennett is poised to deliver insights from his extensive experience in government and business sectors. With a keen understanding of the relationship

between government policies and industry dynamics, Kennett’s address is anticipated to shed light on the critical role of collaboration and innovation in driving progress within the automotive sector.

Sovereign Insurance is hosting a general session which is a Feature Panel – Navigating Cybersecurity in Today’s Digital Landscape hosted by **Ren Blanning**, head of retail growth at Carsales.

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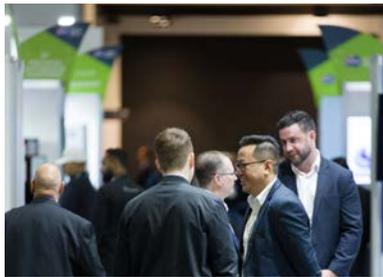
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Continued from previous page
The expert panel discussion will discuss cybersecurity trends impacting dealership operations. It will delve into AI technology, spam lead prevention and the significance of first-party data protection. Attendees can gain actionable strategies to protect their data and systems to reduce the risk of cyber incidents.



of knowledge to driving positive change within the automotive community.

MotorOne is hosting a breakfast with special guest Australian Olympic swimmer **Brooke Hanson**.

The Olympic gold and silver medallist is an icon in the world of swimming and has a story as a powerhouse of motivation and resilience, overcoming challenges with grace and determination.

Carsales is hosting a luncheon with special guest comedian, entertainer and Gold Logie winner **Tom Gleeson**.

Cox Automotive is hosting a keynote address by 2024 NADA chair Gary Gilchrist.

Mr Gilchrist commenced in the industry in 1977 and now owns Gilchrist Chevrolet Buick GMC.

As the 2024 National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) chair, Mr Gilchrist represents Washington's franchised new-car dealers and brings a wealth

AADA Workshop Program Highlights include at this stage:

Elevate Your Appointment Game: Mastering Sales & Service Calls with Steve Curran, managing director, Total Selling Solutions.

This workshop will explore excellence in appointment setting and customer service with real-life scenarios and evidence-based data to refine your approach to sales and service calls. Delegates will discover solutions for streamlining processes, employing simplified techniques, and gain insights from interviews with managers, national trainers, and a real-time problem-solving session with **Steve Curran**.

Used car essentials and the emerging second-hand EV market.

Wayne Oates, head of dealer, Cox Automotive Australia, and **Mike**



Gary Gilchrist



Steve Curran



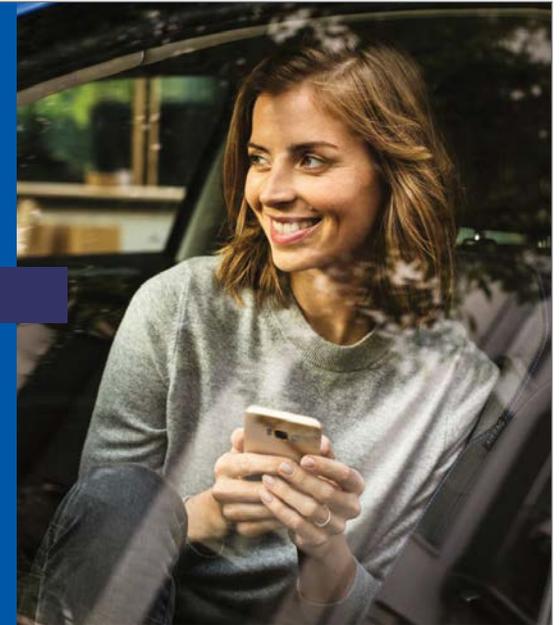
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Costello, corporate affairs manager, Cox Automotive Australia and New Zealand.

With the increasing new car supply and margins facing pressure, used vehicle management is being thrust into the spotlight. Using data analytics and managing critical aspects of the used vehicle department, dealers can seize opportunities effectively.

This workshop is designed to help delegates stay abreast of value

trends, market segment insights and retail/wholesale performance which is crucial to excel in the used market. Participants will discover how leveraging data from both retail and wholesale markets offers a competitive edge. As the EV market expands, dealers must prepare for the emerging used EV market. The workshop is augmented with US and UK data to help equip Australian dealers to retail used EVs competitively.

Mr Tessier said: "This year, the AADA Convention & Expo will highlight an evolving marketplace where new technology and innovation plays a strategic part in the retail automotive customer journey.

"No other event allows new car dealers to explore and review these solutions in one place whilst engaging with industry experts and informative business sessions."

FULL STORY: [CLICK HERE](#)

Daimler opens truck parts warehouse



L-R: Andreas von Wallfeld, Craig Davison and Daniel Whitehead at the new warehouse

Dedicated Daimler group truck parts now sourced from logistics hub in Truganina

By NEIL DOWLING

DAIMLER Truck has opened a truck-dedicated parts warehouse in the logistics hub of Truganina in Melbourne’s west, separate from Mercedes-Benz car storage.

The five-star energy rated facility on a 30,000 square-metre site will handle parts for the Mercedes-Benz Trucks, Freightliner and Fuso brands, as well as Alliance Truck Parts.

Until now, Daimler Truck parts were kept at a warehouse shared with Mercedes-Benz passenger cars.

The new 20,000sqm facility



features a solar array able to produce 125,000kWh of energy each year, as well as a 45,000-litre rainwater tank, motion-sensing energy efficient LED lights, double-glazed windows and electric vehicle charging stations.

It was opened by head of Daimler Truck Overseas, Andreas von Wallfeld, DB Schenker Australia and New Zealand Cluster CEO, Craig Davison, and Daimler Truck Australia Pacific president and CEO, Daniel Whitehead.

Mr Whitehead said the introduction of the new warehouse represents a big step forward.

“This dedicated truck and bus parts warehouse is at the centre of our commitment to our customers across Australia and New Zealand,” he said.

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