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APRIL 2024

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Late update looms for emissions rule

Industry association expects positive outcome for dealers after pressuring government to alter wording in legislation

The 2011 Toyota Prius will be banned from importation into New Zealand under new exhaust emissions rules

A last-minute change to the new exhaust emissions rule is expected just weeks before it comes into effect, prompting an industry association to urge the government to maintain "good dialogue" when updating regulations.

Concern over a clause inserted into an amendment to the Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Exhaust Emissions 2007 has been raised because it would require imports inspected at the border before April 30 to "enter into service" within four months.

The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) has spent the past couple of months working with officials from the NZ Transport Agency and Ministry of Transport (MoT) to get the wording changed or removed.

It says there was no mention of such a proviso during public consultation on the rule last year, and it has caught VIA and its members by surprise and would put financial pressure on dealers to get vehicles registered.

Greig Epps, chief executive, is confident officials will deliver a positive resolution to the problem before used-imported light vehicles have to meet tougher emissions standards from the end of this month.

Following representations from VIA, the NZTA announced in March it was revisiting the amendment over concerns about the impact it would have on the used-imports sector and that it was working with the MoT "to develop a solution".

Epps hopes lessons from this episode will be learned and applied when it comes to the government making future changes to laws affecting the automotive industry.

"Moving forward, it makes it all the clearer that the government needs to keep a good dialogue with industry about regulations it's planning to put in place," he told Autofile.

"It is also recognition of the importance of industry bodies such as VIA being able to have conversations with government and helping it understand the

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Driving change for women in industry

Natasha Callister on promoting diversity


NATASHA CALLISTER
Co-founder, Women in Automotive NZ

The car industry is experiencing a shift as businesses recognise the importance of gender diversity and actively work towards increasing female participation.

Leading this movement is Women in Automotive New Zealand, a collective of seven partners with myself being a co-founder.

It includes the Motor Industry Association, Motor Trade Association, Collision Repair Association, MITO Te Pukenga, NZME's DRIVEN Car Guide and Amanda Wood, an independent partner.

Established in 2022, our organisation is a driving force behind the push for gender equality. It serves as an influential voice advocating for diversity, inclusion and belonging in the industry, raising awareness of key issues and championing change.

We also act as a facilitator of unity by partnering with businesses towards a shared vision of diverse workforces.

In coming months, we will help to drive accountability on critical actions needed to achieve this vision by launching an industry-wide membership accord.

This will be the first of its kind for the automotive industry and is being made possible with the support of Custom Fleet, a foundation sponsor on this work.

The case for change in our industry is compelling. Women are equal consumers of the product, yet a 17 per cent participation rate, and much less in leadership roles, means they have significantly less influence on what product is brought into the country, how it's marketed to them, and the overall sales and after-sales experience.

Research shows organisations with gender-diverse executive teams are up to 25 per cent more likely to financially outperform those that are non-diverse. By embracing diversity, automotive businesses stand to gain a competitive edge and drive innovation.

Ultimately, our industry's future prosperity hinges on its ability to attract and retain top diverse talent.

As technological advancements reshape the sector and customer preferences drive innovation in retail experiences, businesses must leverage the full spectrum of talent available to thrive in an increasingly competitive landscape.

Top female talent was recognised recently at NADA 2024, the prestigious global automotive show in Las Vegas, where – for the first time – both the dealer and truck dealer of the year awards were won by women in the same year.

Back home, two talented female leaders took out the categories of staff excellence and best-performing new dealership in the inaugural MTF Finance Dealer Awards.

The movement to increase participation of women in the industry is gaining momentum. Heavy hitters, such as the AA, have taken the pledge to stand together with Women in Automotive NZ and are committed to being part of the change.

For more about our upcoming membership accord, email info@womeninautomotive.nz.

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Autofile magazine is also available online as a readable file or downloadable as a PDF.

Back copies dating to 2017 can be found on the website where you can subscribe to our Insight email alerts.

 ISSN 0112-3475 (print) **ISSN 2350-3181** (online)

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impact of proposed regulations.

"Without the constant pressure we have put on the NZTA and the MoT over the past two months about the wording in the vehicle exhaust emissions rule, we probably wouldn't be getting a solution.

"It's been a long process and unfortunate we've had to go through it. But we're positive about a solution going forward. It's been a salutary lesson in how industry and government need to interact on rule developments in the future."

All used light vehicles currently crossing the border must meet the Euro 4 standard or its equivalents, but they will move to Euro 5 from April 30 and then Euro 6d from July 1, 2028.

As for new light vehicles, they currently have to meet Euro 5. The updated rule means newly introduced models – ones not previously sold here – will have to match Euro 6d or an equivalent from July 1, 2027.

Existing models have another year until the regulations change and they will move to the Euro 6d criteria from July 1, 2028.

Hino Dutros and Isuzu Elfs built before 2010 will not meet import standards from April 30

Epps notes there has been work by VIA, the NZTA and MoT to clarify where the four-month clause came from and what it meant, with the general view "enter into service" refers to a vehicle being registered here for the first time.

He says government officials have taken the issue seriously and treated it as a priority. However, they have been unable to confirm when any changes may be made.

"VIA raised an issue with the exhaust emissions rule because we were concerned about the wording around entering into service after four months.

"We felt that was unnecessary and an unreasonable restriction on vehicles that were border checked before the end of April and would still comply with the existing Euro 4 standard.

"We have had some positive conversations with officials and they're working towards a solution. We think we will get clarity around mid-April."

Epps is also encouraged by the NZTA releasing a preliminary view late last month of how the vehicle inspection requirements manual will look from April 30, which has no mention of a four-month period to enter into service.

If the four-month clause stayed, it could affect tens of thousands of used cars including some already here, others on vessels heading to New Zealand and those still in Japan or other jurisdictions.

Epps points out that about 10,000 used-imported vehicles a month come into the country. If the amendment were to be left unchanged, it could affect about 40,000 units.

"Hopefully by April 30 we'll have a solution and we won't need to think about getting those thousands of vehicles registered within a very short timeframe," he adds.

"It would be a push for the industry to sell those vehicles and a push for the NZTA to cope with that many registrations. It would also be a massive financial burden on businesses because one possible workaround would be registering vehicles to themselves.

"That's why it's important we keep pushing for the change to this rule because there are a lot of vehicles impacted by this.

"It's been unfortunate we have had to deal with an unnecessary level of uncertainty over the past couple of months, but I'm positive about where things are going."

Epps says there has been no word on who introduced the four-month limit into the amendment, which was signed by David Parker, the former minister of transport, on the eve of the general election last October.

A delay in the formation of

Guide to new rules

Changes to the exhaust emissions rule for used and new imported cars kick in on April 30.

Petrol vehicles, except disability vehicles, of classes MA, MB, MC, MD1, MD2 and NA – commonly known as passenger cars, vans and utes from Japan – must meet a standard of Japan 2005 Low Harm or Japan 2018 or higher.

These codes for petrol vehicles will be acceptable to import: Dxx, first registered on or after January 1, 2012, 3xx, 4xx, 5xx, 6xx, 7xx or higher.

Diesel vehicles from Japan must meet an emissions code of Lxx or higher. The codes are: Lxx, Fxx, Mxx, Rxx, Qxx, 3xx, 4xx, 5xx, 6xx, 7xx or higher.

For other jurisdictions, such as Europe and Australia, used petrol and diesel vehicles that have been border inspected, or are newly manufactured from April 30, must meet emissions standards Euro 5, US Tier 2 or ADR 79/04.

(Source: MVTR)

the coalition government meant full details of the legislation were not formally communicated until much later.

"Because we hadn't seen this as a possible part of the rule, we didn't go looking for it," explains Epps.

"It wasn't until people started thinking about this transition period that eagle eyes spotted the extra clause and said, 'what does this mean?'. That's when we started pushing the NZTA and MoT for an explanation."

Epps says it has been suggested some people within government were concerned about dealers stockpiling units that meet the current Euro 4 standard "but we've spent a lot of our time disabusing officials of the feasibility of that".

"There's not a business out there working to a model that would allow it to purchase hundreds or thousands of vehicles ahead of the changeover because no one has the capital to buy that many vehicles up front, nor the space to store them," he adds.

> It's been a salutary lesson in how industry and government need to interact on rule developments – Greig Epps, VIA

"We don't know where the clause came from. Hopefully the ministry and NZTA are undertaking some review of the process and how they got to this place. We hope they learn from it.

"This problem arising is an incentive to us to ensure we keep good relationships with officials working in the automotive space and for them to know they can talk to us about proposed changes."

IMPACT ON INDUSTRY

Once the updated exhaust emissions rule does come into effect, dealers will no longer be able to import a number of popular petrol and hybrid models – and the top three affected cars are all made by Toyota.

The legislation means petrol vehicles coming into the country with a Dxx emissions code must be first registered anywhere in the world on or after January 1, 2012.

Kit Wilkerson, VIA's head of policy and strategy, says data shows the biggest sellers that will become inaccessible to the New Zealand market will be Toyota Prius models built in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

These vehicles still have a Dxx code, which signifies a 75 per cent reduction in harmful emissions over the Japan 2005 regulation. But because they were built pre-2012, they will be off-limits to traders here.

"All three are hybrids and very low-emissions vehicles, but the new standards will remove those as options," Wilkerson told Autofile.

"Under the new standards, we will lose access to a lot of good vehicles. These are high efficiency, low-emissions models, the kind of cars we bring in to reduce carbon dioxide and noxious emissions."

He says New Zealand has imported about 1,800 units of the 2010 Prius, while the figures for the 2011 and 2009 variants are about 1,000 and 650 respectively.

The leading 20 vehicles by sales that will no longer be able to be imported all have some form of petrol powertrain and all have Dxx codes, explains Wilkerson.

The biggest seller that will slip onto the banned list that does not have a Dxx code is the 2009 Subaru Impreza CBA with 40 of those imported in the past year.

As for light commercials, the looming changes mean traders will

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A 2012 diesel Toyota Hiace, above, can still be imported from next month but pre-2020 petrol equivalents, pictured left, can't

be unable to access a number of petrol Toyota Hiaces and buyers wanting such vans may face a 30 per cent price hike.

"Dealers won't be able to bring in any petrol Hiaces pre-2019, which all start with Cxx, but they can still bring in a 2012 diesel version even though diesels are significantly more harmful," says Wilkerson.

"Allowing really old diesels but forcing us to bring in much younger petrol models is frustrating, particularly when the government says it has a goal but the solution doesn't appear to help achieve that goal.

"As far as price goes, an early indication is that the jump from a 2019 Hiace to having to purchase a 2020 model or younger is probably going to attract a premium of 30 per cent.

"It shows the government is not rating the right thing.

"We argued in our submission that it should take a more systems-based approach to how it is equating these emissions standards and rate them by harm."

VIA believes this shift will result in a number of people importing older diesel vans as opposed to moving to new petrol equivalents that meet the latest standards.

As for the passenger-vehicle market, the price impact is expected to be minimal because the cars that the industry will lose access to aren't coming in any significant volume and there are sufficient alternatives to replace them.

"In 2028 when the standards get tougher, I don't know if we will be able to say that because we don't know what vehicles will be available in the next few years," adds Wilkerson.

"Right now, the average vehicle we import is about 10 years old but come 2028 the standard we will have to meet wasn't required in vehicles until 2020. This means the used industry is only going to be certain of sourcing vehicles that are seven to eight years old.

"If the government says we can't bring in vehicles unless they're under eight years of age that's going to have a huge impact on the cost of vehicles. I don't know if New Zealanders can afford that."

The majority of diesel vehicles currently being imported will meet the standards being introduced this month. However, models that won't include the 2008 Hino Dutro, which is an NB class vehicle, pre-2010 Hino Dutros and pre-2010 Isuzu Elfs.

"We're not losing much else that's had any volume and importers will simply have to move to a later variant of those models that meets the standards," explains Wilkerson.

"The Hino Dutro meets the government's new standards from 2011 and it will be similar for the other models.

"In general the highest volumes will start with L, Q, S or a number. Those are the ones that are good to import and that's the vast majority of what we're already importing in diesels."

Overall, Wilkerson says the new rules will not impact the used-imports industry significantly as the majority of vehicles being imported already meet what the government has specified as the Euro 5 standard.

The equivalencies between European and Japanese standards used by the government remain a bone of contention for VIA, which raised its concerns with officials during consultation on the rule amendment last year.

"There appears to be too much interest in harmonising with Europe and we have tried to highlight the benefits we can get by harmonising more with Japan," opines Wilkerson.

"Even though we have asked, we haven't been given any explanation from the government as to why it set the equivalencies as it has but we have heard it's strictly chronological, which makes no sense.

"VIA continues to do research in this space. Our submission was based on a model we developed in-house. We were trying to find a good way to compare emissions that could be quantified.

"The government seems to have a bias towards European methodology and achievement and wasn't prepared to accept our argument. That said, we're continuing to do research in this area to strengthen our argument for the next time we need it." ⊕

Cars off-limits

Top three imported vehicles that will not meet the exhaust emissions rule from April 30 and the number imported into New Zealand.

1. **2011 Toyota Prius**: 1,800
2. **2010 Toyota Prius**: 1,000
3. **2009 Toyota Prius**: 650

Source: VIA

Charges will 'jeopardise' market

BYD Auto warns consumers view RUC as a "huge barrier" to buying electrified cars. Pictured are the Seal, Dolphin and Atto 3

There are fears sales of light electric vehicles will tumble and dealerships specialising in such models are at greater risk of closing after the government started applying road-user charges (RUC) to cars with plugs this month.

Owners of battery EVs (BEVs) now have to pay $76 in RUC per 1,000km travelled, which is the same as light diesel vehicles.

Plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) face a $38 charge for the same distance with the lower cost recognising those drivers also pay fuel excise duty (FED).

The legislation came into effect on April 1 after the Road User Charges (Light Electric RUC Vehicles) Amendment Bill made rapid progress through parliament last month.

The law change is the first stage of the coalition's plans to apply RUC to all vehicles eventually.

The transport and infrastructure select committee received 518 written submissions on the bill's original proposals despite providing barely two days for the industry and public to provide feedback.

Figures from across the automotive sector have warned the government that the new RUC will likely hurt sales of light EVs, which are already suffering after the clean car discount (CCD) was axed at the end of 2023.

ACEV Ltd, a dealership in Takapuna, Auckland, stated in its submission that adding RUC and removing rebates has "caused a considerable slowdown in the market for us and we know of one EV dealership that is closing down".

"There are only about five pure EV/hybrid dealerships in New Zealand that we know of for imported second-hand EVs. If things don't change to a fairer system and EV sales stay low, then we could see further closures."

The company recommended petrol vehicles be brought into the RUC system within the next three months. If that's unattainable, it suggested doing it in six months and, at the same time, revising charges for BEVs and PHEVs to a "fairer value".

BYD Auto New Zealand is concerned the timing of the new measures will contribute to the "complete collapse" of the EV market and that RUC are viewed by consumers as a "huge barrier" to buying electrified cars.

It predicted the introduction of RUC for EVs will lead to dealerships closing, job losses, marques delaying launching models in New Zealand and some new brands staying away altogether.

The company added it was planning to soon introduce its new "Super PHEV" hybrid technology here in the form of an SUV and a ute. The technology means vehicles will have three odometers – one for the whole vehicle, another to record the electric-only kilometres and a third for the distance travelled using petrol.

"We may decide not to bring these models to market now as buyers think RUC make the vehicles uncompetitive," said BYD. It recommended delaying road-user charges for BEVs and PHEVs, and for all vehicles to have them introduced at the same time.

A joint submission was made by the Motor Industry Association (MIA), the Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA), Motor Trade Association, AA, Drive Electric and Better NZ Trust.

Aimee Wiley, the MIA's chief executive, told a hearing that the industry groups believed linking the RUC rate to the current charge for diesel vehicles would create a further disincentive and significantly impact the demand and uptake for EVs.

The industry's response described the fees first put forward by the government of $76 for BEVs and $53 for PHEVs as "not fair or equitable", and urged for them to be set at $60 and $42 respectively.

Government MPs on the select

ACEV Ltd in Auckland says recent policy changes by the government are slowing EV sales

committee then accidentally voted in favour of a Labour proposal to set the cost for PHEVs at a 50 per discount from the standard light-vehicle rate, taking it down to $38, and cabinet agreed to the recommendation.

SEEKING BALANCE

The amended bill was passed into legislation on March 28. Simeon Brown, Minister of Transport, says the reduced RUC rate for PHEVs recognises such models use petrol and a battery for power.

"This change seeks to balance the need for these vehicles to fairly pay for the use of the road and variable range of fuel efficiencies within PHEVs," he explains.

"Not having a reduced rate would mean they would be required to pay a full RUC rate and then claim back any petrol excise used, which would have been administratively difficult and open to fraud."

He adds the reduced rate for PHEVs is a temporary measure to lessen distortions while officials work on plans to transition the entire fleet to the RUC system and away from paying at the pump.

"The Act-National coalition agreement commits the government to introduce RUC for all vehicles so all motorists pay the same amount to use the road based on distance and weight, rather than what type of fuel powers their vehicle's engine."

The MIA has welcomed cabinet backing the lower rate for plug-in hybrids and describes it as a more equitable interim solution until RUC is universally applied to all light vehicles.

Based on the average fuel consumption of new PHEVs sold in the past two years, MIA analysis shows that at the initial proposed RUC rate of $53, a plug-in hybrid would pay 70 per cent more than an equivalent hybrid petrol model and a full BEV 95 per cent more.

Wiley adds: "This would unfairly disadvantage owners of PHEVs, whose battery range can vary according to model and age, potentially discourage the uptake of these low-emissions vehicles and undermine progress to reduce transport emissions.

"The MIA recommended instead that the RUC rate for both PHEVs and BEVs be benchmarked to the average contribution of equivalent petrol-engined vehicles and not the full rate.

"While the MIA is pleased with the lower RUC rate for PHEVs, we're disappointed a fairer rate has not been introduced for BEVs also as the higher rate will likely discourage some buyers."

Besides the shared industry submission, the MIA provided its own feedback at the select committee stage. This raised concerns over the timing of removing the RUC exemption for light EVs so soon after repealing the CCD.

Another area of concern was equity of road tax regardless of engine type or motive power and the tax system used.

Wiley said the originally proposed rates would create significant inequity between RUC and FED, and create a consumer perception of "penalty on a plug".

"From a tax system perspective, this effectively incentivises petrol vehicles and compounds current challenges for industry associated with delicately balancing weak retail demand for EVs and

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Mevo says a fully electric Hyundai Kona will pay about 20 per cent more per kilometre in RUC than the comparable petrol model

increasingly stringent target achievement of clean-vehicle importer standard obligations," she explained.

"We ask that in addition to reviewing the rate of RUC for BEVs and PHEVs that the government also look at alternative policies to help stimulate retail demand for electric vehicles."

Simon Rutherford, managing director of Ford NZ, put in a submission saying the company recognises the need to move to a fair user-pays system whereby all vehicle owners contribute to maintaining infrastructure.

He added the marque's views align with those of the MIA, of which Rutherford is president, but Ford is concerned about the equity of the charges and assumptions underlying them during this transition phase, which "may not be short".

"We believe this should neither advantage nor disadvantage any one technology at this point as regard to RUC, and should balance FED/RUC use to ensure equitable contribution to the National Land Transport Fund."

Rutherford said the company's recommendation was designed to ensure nobody overpays or underpays or is incentivised or disincentivised.

UNIVERSAL SYSTEM

VIA also provided a separate submission to the committee. It urged the government to move to universal RUC as soon as possible and to consider excluding vehicles up to 1,200kg or even 1,500kg.

It added any pro-rated rates offered on PHEVs should only apply to models that meet specified low-emissions criteria, including a minimum EV range and or maximum carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions rating.

While an electronic means of managing RUC would be preferred, VIA said the more manual process that currently exists can work for an initial rollout of universal charges.

Drive Electric voiced its opposition to the timing of the removal of the RUC exemption for light EVs, particularly while petrol vehicles remain in the FED scheme.

Modelling commissioned by the lobby group suggested the CCD being chopped will result in between 100,000 and 350,000 fewer EVs on our roads by 2030 depending on the impact of the government's review into the clean car standard (CCS).

"We recognise the need for EVs, in time, to contribute fairly and equitably to the costs of roads," it said. "However, with the removal of the CCD at the end of 2023, evidence so far suggests that EV uptake is stalling. This decline in uptake was anticipated.

"Our concern with the timing is that the introduction of RUC will compound the effect of the removal of the CCD on EV uptake.

"With the removal of the discount, the addition of an annual road-user charge will make EVs less attractive to consumers in perceived and real terms."

> **In the space of a few months, New Zealand has moved from being a leader in EV adoption to one of the lowest in the developed world** – Tesla

Drive Electric highlighted that members running fleet companies or mobility-as-a-service operations have said the government's recent policy decisions will reduce the number of businesses opting to move to EVs.

It noted commercial and business customers purchase about 60 per cent of new vehicles in New Zealand, and are crucial to getting EVs into the second-hand fleet.

"The introduction of RUC… in effect incentivises petrol and petrol-hybrid vehicles operating under the FED scheme over BEVs and PHEVs," added Drive Electric.

"In terms of signals from the tax system, this is a perverse outcome. It also fails to meet the principle of establishing this bill, which is that all vehicles pay an equitable share towards roading costs."

Among the other submitters to the select committee were the Better New Zealand Trust, which is a member of the Global EV Alliance, and Mevo, a car-sharing company based in major towns and cities across the country.

The trust stated that even with RUC added, the cost of driving a BEV is less than half that of an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle.

"But the joint effect of the loss of the CCD and addition of RUC will make many potential EV purchasers decide against doing so. They will maintain their status quo and buy another ICE. That car will remain in the fleet for up to 20 years if purchased new."

Meanwhile, Mevo was unhappy the legislation charges a higher relative rate for road use to EVs compared to fuel excise on standard ICE vehicles.

"Estimates for this vary, but a comparable BEV Hyundai Kona will pay around 20 per cent more per kilometre than the petrol model and around double the hybrid," it stressed.

It claimed the new charges will also unfairly penalise businesses with large EV fleets, which will now be paying more per kilometre than any other road users.

"This is especially severe for fleet operations, such as Mevo's, which rely on a high proportion of fast-charging versus cheaper electricity rates accessible to EV owners charging at home."

Mevo noted another impact will be making PHEVs unworkable for fleet operations because they will be driven on petrol more often, "effectively magnifying the double-payment of RUC and fuel excise".

In turn, the company predicted this will push fleet selection towards ICEs and mild hybrids, "which not only are worse for the environment, but increase New Zealand's dependence on foreign energy for many years to come as these vehicles exit fleets and enter the second-hand market, and continue to be used for many years".

It called for new RUC category to be created for BEVs set at a comparable amount to efficient hybrids, "not twice as much, unfairly penalising these vehicles".

Tesla had its say at the select committee stage. It suggested revenue from the charges for BEVs should be used to fund a rebate on newly imported EVs "based on the CCD without the so-called ute tax".

"Based on Climate Change Commission modelling of light passenger EV kilometres travelled, these vehicles will pay over $540 million in RUC by the end of 2027, enough to pay rebates at the previous CCD levels for 77,000 new EVs or 155,000 used EVs," the company stated. "Rebates do not need to be permanent and can be phased out by 2030."

Its submission highlighted that after the removal of the CCD, EV registrations fell by 80 per cent in the first two months of 2024 when compared with the 2023 monthly average.

"This has increased the average emissions of newly registered light vehicles by 20 per cent, with average emissions of 165g/km so far in 2024 exceeding the CCS target. In the space of a few months, New Zealand has moved from being a leader in EV adoption to one of the lowest in the developed world."

Tesla also fears demand for BEVs will be impacted by the new rules because some pure ICEs, as well as non-plug-in hybrids and PHEVs, will face lower overall road tax than zero-emitters.

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'It's all about the people'

When folk in the car industry talk about their peers, Wallis Dumper's name is invariably high up on the list.

Now Wally, or Wal as he's affectionately known, has bid a "lovely farewell" to his colleagues at Inchcape New Zealand.

And, for many, he will be inextricably linked to the Subaru brand on our shores.

"I've always believed it's all about the people," he told Autofile. "It seems a lot of the staff were there with me for a long time – some for 33 years while others have an average tenure of 11 years."

Wallis Dumper has been associated with Subaru for some 33 years

Dumper left his position as managing director in March. He had held that role for Subaru since 2010 after previously leading the company from 1996 to 2006.

His role was rejigged in July last year to include heading up Inchcape NZ after the company entered retail operations when it became the importer and distributor for LDV and SsangYong. The latter has now been rebadged as KGM.

A restructuring of the business resulted in him taking voluntary redundancy last month.

Not being at work is "a bit different, that's for sure" and Dumper has been spending time at the family bach in Papamoa, near Tauranga, with his wife.

He plans to take some time out and see how that goes for a while. Longer term, he may look at doing some consultancy or advisory work in the industry. As he points out: "I've spent my whole life with motorbikes and cars."

Dumper describes his team, over the years, as being "magnificent" and he notes there have also been some "great" Subaru dealers.

Among them are Mike Farmer in the Bay of Plenty, Rob Townshend in Hawke's Bay, Wayne Leach, of Wingers Hamilton, Ken Cummings in the South Island and Rick Armstrong – "all successful businesspeople and brilliant to work with".

Looking back, he says: "When I first joined, we needed to make a lot of change. For example, when we stopped doing two-wheel drive that was important in saving the business. We lost the Legacy but tripled sales of the Outback.

Dumper joined Champion Spark Plug NZ in the 1980s

"While I worked for a global company, we were allowed to do our own thing here in New Zealand and I don't have many regrets.

"There have been many memorable moments down the years. Working with Subaru in Japan was great. I've made some lifelong friends there as well, such as the New Zealand manager back then who's now managing director of Subaru Canada."

Dumper says the Covid-19 pandemic has changed a few things, "but I still believe you need to have people working at work, to come to work. And if you ever get bored in this industry, then you're probably dead. It's changing rapidly, but it's always about the people."

ROLLING BACK YEARS

Dumper's career in the industry started during his school years when he groomed cars for David Slater's dealership across the road from his parents' home in Manurewa, south Auckland, which they moved to in the 1960s from Hamilton.

Slater later sold the shop and Dumper found himself working for Bill Russell, dealing in Suzuki motorcycles before shifting to Honda.

"Soon I was working for Blue Wing Honda, which distributed motorbikes in the 1970s and early 1980s. The franchise change caused uproar as Bill and the Colemans had built up Suzuki to be strong.

"Blue Wing Honda was owned by Motor Holdings, which was also the Subaru distributor. If I had known I would be running Subaru years later that would have been quite a thought.

"Also significant was seeing the Colemans sell off local distribution to Japan at the time – it was a New Zealand ▶

first to have a wholly owned overseas company."

Dumper later joined Champion Spark Plug NZ. "This was a joint venture with Fisher & Paykel because of the protective law surrounding the Suzuki change.

"The industry was being deregulated and the fact I had some Japanese background dealing with NGK Spark Plug Co assisted me to deal with deregulation and, in hindsight, highlighted my strength as a change manager."

Dumper worked for Champion for seven years. During his time there, he attended events such as the first Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide and the Indianapolis 500.

"I was involved in events from Western Springs Speedway and the World Jet Boat Marathon to Pukekohe Park race meetings.

"I went with Champion to Australia where I ran sales, new products and technical, but returned home because I love it here."

Dumper joined Moller Yamaha in New Zealand in 1990, which was still contending with the 1989 financial crisis. "I learned a lot about dealing with adversity and the power of a superior product like Yamaha."

By 1996 he wanted to broaden his horizons, which resulted in him securing employment with Inchcape until 2006. At the time, Subaru NZ was in hot water and losing money.

"Too many dealers didn't understand the value of all-wheel drive. This saw me reduce the dealers by 17 from 32 to 15 with a brand focus and only retain all-wheel drives."

In 2006, Dumper had another decision to make when the Giltrap family proposed he take the helm of a private ownership operation working with the Jaguar and Land Rover brands.

"We set it up with nothing but good support from other directors.

"In one year, it was up and running – lean and mean like Subaru, and profitable. I learnt a lot about retail, a start-up and making a success in New Zealand out of prestige brands."

The GFC then hit, necessitating a downsizing and "all the pain that goes with laying off people who've done nothing wrong".

Dumper voluntarily chose to become redundant in 2009 and worked for a while as a consultant. In 2010, Inchcape invited him to return with a focus on trust, culture changes and setting growth targets.

"What was especially great was more than half the staff I had previously recruited were still there."

Unsurprisingly, the company was voted "most engaged team / best employer" in Gallup surveys. "I think my philosophy of treating others the way I'd like to be treated has proven its worth."

An in-depth interview with Dumper was published in Autofile's February 2017 Issue. It can be found in the "magazine" section of autofile.co.nz.

Team praised after close race

Mercedes-Benz New Zealand has recognised business and individual excellence across its cars, vans and financial services divisions.

The top two franchises of 2023 when it came to cars were Mercedes-Benz Auckland and Mercedes-Benz Botany, which shared the Circle of Excellence Award.

It was a repeat success for the Botany team after it took out the main prize for 2022.

Joerg Schmidt, general manager for Mercedes-Benz NZ Cars, says the two businesses delivered exceptional results across sales and service measures.

"Both winners demonstrated dedication and team spirit resulting in their exceptional performance outcomes for 2023," he adds.

"I would like to thank the entire network for its ongoing customer focus and enthusiasm. It was a very closely fought race."

↑ Staff from Mercedes-Benz Botany celebrate a successful night. From left, Steve Mabbett, Jon Aldridge, Petra Morley, Steve Mason, Armstrong's chief executive Troy Kennedy and Lee Li

← Joerg Schmidt, left, general manager of Mercedes-Benz NZ Cars, and Trevor Walmsley, dealer principal of Mercedes-Benz Auckland

→ Tracey Appleton, business development manager of Mercedes-Benz Vans NZ, and Craig Innes, dealer principal of Mercedes-Benz North Shore

The Circle of Excellence prize was introduced by the brand in 2020 to recognise its top-performing passenger car retailers.

Meanwhile, Mercedes-Benz North Shore won the top award in the vans section.

"With excellent results across all areas, it aspired to be the best of the best, striving once again to claim the title of the leading retailer in this category," says Tracey Appleton, business development manager of Mercedes-Benz Vans.

Spencer Pallesen, of Mercedes-Benz Hawke's Bay, was voted best sales manager at Mercedes-Benz Cars.

The top sales consultants were Frederick Cheng, elite, of the North Shore, Martin Ngan, premium, of Wellington, and Ben Trethewey, AMG, of Auckland.

↑ Frederick Cheng, of Mercedes-Benz North Shore

↓ Ben Trethewey, of Mercedes-Benz Auckland

Lee Li, of Botany, won the gong for certified pre-owned.

Jeremy Duffy and Ben Mundy, of Christchurch, were service manager and adviser of the year respectively. Steve Mabbett, of Botany, was best parts manager.

As for Mercedes-Benz Vans, CablePrice Christchurch completed a double thanks to service manager Mark Dragovich and Richard Field, salesperson.

Cameron McIntyre, of Keith Andrews Hamilton, was parts manager of the year, while Petra Morley, of Mercedes-Benz Botany, was the financial services division's business manager of the year.

The accolades were presented at a dinner event at Auckland's Viaduct with staff from across the country attending. All Blacks legend Sean Fitzpatrick was the special guest and shared some personal experiences to start proceedings.

IN BRIEF

Dealership in Hawke's Bay changes hands

Wayne Kirk Motor Group has acquired Napier Kia from the Ebbett Group to integrate into its existing operations. The dealership will continue to be located in Tennyson Street for sales and Carlyle Street for servicing.

"We are proud to be given the opportunity to take ownership of the Napier Kia brand," says group founder Wayne Kirk, whose son Sam becomes dealer principal of the business.

The group also acknowledges Dave and Aileen Howarth, dealer principal and business manager of Ebbett Hawke's Bay respectively, and the Ebbett Group for their support during the transition process.

Hundreds of cars recalled for brake systems

BMW New Zealand has called back more than 800 vehicles made in 2022 and 2023 that may be impacted by a braking problem.

The alert affects the X1, X5, X6, pictured, X7 and XM ranges, and some cars in the 2 Series, 3 Series and 7 Series, which could suffer signal interference in the brake system's electronics.

"In rare cases, this can increase the operating force required to actuate the brake," the company says. "In addition, other brake-control functions, such as ABS and dynamic stability control, are not available."

Drivers will be informed before or during the journey if there's a problem by the brake-warning lights coming on. They will also see a check-control message on the central display advising them to "avoid abrupt braking as much as possible".

The company is working with dealers to contact affected customers for replacement parts to be installed.

New microchip factory being built in Japan

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (TSMC) wants to open a second manufacturing plant in Japan with backing from Toyota and Sony.

Japan Advanced Semiconductor Manufacturing, which is majority owned by TSMC, will start building the new factory this year and aims to bring it into operation by the end of 2027.

The expansion of TSMC's operations in Japan highlights the Japanese government's push to onshore manufacturing of microchips, which – in addition to cars – are used in everything from smartphones to military weapons. They are seen as critical components in technology, such as artificial intelligence.

Government policy changes impact lending

Applications for vehicle loans fell by 12 per cent in February compared to the same month in 2023 even though overall consumer credit demand rose by six per cent.

"This could be attributable to the removal of the clean car discount and subsequent decline in electric-vehicle sales," reports Centrix.

The proportion of car loans in arrears hit six per cent in January, which was an increase of five per cent year-on-year.

Netballers receive plug-in fleet for season

The MG Mystics, defending champions in the ANZ Premiership netball series, have taken delivery of a fleet of new MG HS Plug-In Hybrids.

Phil Vyver, the team's chief executive, says: "MG NZ has provided invaluable support to the Mystics. We're thrilled to have them as our principal sponsor again for 2024."

Vern Whitehead

Founder of industry publications passes

Tributes have been paid to the former publisher of magazines and websites covering the automotive industry.

Vern Whitehead's death on March 15 came suddenly although after an extended period of poor health.

The 83-year-old was the founder of Autofile and Autodeal, which was a computerised reference guide for car dealers. He later co-founded AutoTalk and associated titles as part of Auto Media Group Ltd.

David Vinsen, former chief executive officer of the Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA), says Whitehead's contribution to the sector may not be entirely visible to those outside "trade politics" circles.

"He did a lot of that behind the scenes. He wasn't just writing articles and selling advertising, he was a player in the industry from a neutral, moderate perspective."

Vinsen adds that when he took on his role at VIA, there was "real animosity" between it and the new-vehicle industry.

Perry Kerr, chief executive of the Motor Industry Association at the time, "was almost persona non grata as far as our members were concerned".

"Vern was a facilitator in introducing Perry to me and me to Perry," recalls Vinsen.

"I spent a bit of time with Vern, I think I knew him fairly well. I shall really miss him."

Whitehead started his career as a journalist with the Rotorua Daily Post before switching to the commercial side of the business and becoming general manager.

He eventually struck out on his own producing mostly travel-based publications, including destination guides for Ansett and Qantas.

Whitehead later focused on the automotive industry. He partnered with some key groups of car traders in the 1980s to launch Dealer Systems, which was the first local mechanical breakdown and protection product company.

In the late-90s, Whitehead launched Auto.co.nz, a platform that provided the basis for many New Zealand dealers' first websites.

He also teamed up with TV3's owner CanWest to launch AutoTV, a low-cost platform for traders to list vehicles on morning television, and partnered with RedBook to bring its pricing product here.

Whitehead sold Autofile in 2005, keeping a hand in the trade with the Identicar publication and, for a time, his stake in RedBook.

Soon after, he entered the Australian market with AutoTalk. Although not an initial success, it laid the foundation for eventually launching the title in New Zealand.

Whitehead was also a valued member of the Waiheke Island community where he lived for the past three decades.

He helped to raise thousands of dollars for Waiheke Homecare Hospice through a series of garden parties, and was a former long-term president and life member of the island's rugby club.

Whitehead was co-founder of the Electric Island Waiheke, a trust with the aim of switching all transport there to electric.

A public service for him was held at Palm Beach Hall, Waiheke, on March 24. He is survived by his wife Betsy, their son Darren, daughters Annabelle and Rachel, and grandson Dominic.

Franchise awards for 'commitment'

Ford New Zealand has unveiled the winners of its annual President's Awards, which recognise the achievements of its dealers and puts a particular emphasis on those delivering a "positive customer experience".

The five recipients of the special prize for 2023 were Andrew Collett, of Fairview Motors in Hamilton, John Hutchinson, of Team Hutchinson Ford in Christchurch, Paul McKendry of McKendry Ford in Blenheim, Nathan Abernethy, of Regional Ford in Gore, and Peter Gluyas, of Gluyas Ford, Ashburton.

From left, Paul McKendry, Nathan Abernethy, Simon Rutherford, Ford NZ managing director, John Hutchinson, Andrew Collett and Peter Gluyas

Simon Rutherford, managing director of Ford NZ, congratulated the winners during a gala dinner hosted at the Marriott Resort at Momi Bay, Fiji.

The event was attended by Ford dealer principals, their partners and members of the blue oval's New Zealand team.

"Ensuring a positive customer experience at every stage of ownership is our priority and these dealerships have shined in all those areas," says Rutherford.

He describes 2023 as being a "challenging year for everyone", while those winning awards showed "an incredible amount of dedication and commitment".

The largest weighting for the awards criteria is the Ford customer experience as measured by satisfaction scores provided by consumers.

The marque works closely with its dealerships to improve all aspects of this area.

"Whether it's a customer new to the brand or a returning dyed-in-blue fan, our aim is for a fantastic customer experience at every point of the relationship," says Jerry Delaney, Ford NZ sales director.

"The dealerships and their teams provide great examples of what you can do to make customers' time with Ford the best it can be. We're excited to recognise their efforts with these prestigious awards."

Company drives campaign for cancer charity

Autosure has raised more than $8,500 for the Gut Cancer Foundation after an annual auction and online donation campaign helped it smash its fundraising goal.

The company, which is part of DPL Insurance, is a regular supporter of the charity's annual Give It Up campaign that's held each March.

Autosure set a target of raising $4,500 this year but eclipsed that after the auction netted $4,000 and attracting more than $4,500 in other donations.

From left: Antony Vriens, DPL Insurance chairman, Liam Willis, Gut Cancer Foundation executive officer, and James Searle, DPL's chief executive officer

Natalie Ross-Murphy, left, DPL's marketing manager, and Brad Prentice, account manager, show off one of the lots

James Searle, DPL Insurance's chief executive officer, was auctioneer at the bidding event in Auckland on March 20 when the top price paid across a range of lots was $300 for a Mike Pero Racing jacket signed by Kiwi motorsport legend Greg Murphy.

"It's our fifth year of having the auction," Searle told Autofile. "Every year it grows, and we really appreciate donations from our staff and business partners."

Natalie Ross-Murphy, marketing manager, adds it was a fantastic night with some pretty ferocious bidding that helped raise an "incredible amount of money for this amazing charity".

All the cash raised by the company will go towards the foundation's clinical research and trials to help improve the outcome for the 17 Kiwis diagnosed with gut cancer each day.

Liam Willis, executive officer of the foundation, attended the auction and says it was a pleasure to speak with the Autosure team that helped make it such a success.

"We're incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of Autosure and the wider Turners Automotive Group," he enthuses.

"Over the past four years, the Turners group has raised more than $160,000 for the Gut Cancer Foundation with Autosure playing a key role in this.

"That level of commitment means we can plan for the long term and commit to meaningful projects that are changing the dial for patients in New Zealand with cancers of the digestive system."

Visit www.gutcancer.org.nz to find out more about the charity.

From mechanic to job at top

Tom Peck would probably describe himself as an afficionado of one brand above all else and that's no surprise given he spent most of his career working for it.

Peck retired as chief executive officer of Suzuki New Zealand this month and takes with him knowledge spanning more than 38 years' continuous service with the company.

His early experience was mostly motorbike-based because Colemans Suzuki, with its head office in Whanganui, was predominately an importer of two-wheelers with only a few two-stroke cars in its line-up.

After leaving school, Peck joined the company as apprentice mechanic before becoming its service manager over a seven-year period. At the time, it operated stores in several centres.

Peck then had an overseas break before ending up as an automotive tutor at the tech in Petone for a few years before moving to Whanganui where he rejoined Colemans when it was selling out.

"After it became Suzuki NZ, I was national service manager for motorcycles before adding marine and then motor vehicles," he recalls.

"A few years later, the company asked me to become sales manager for motorbikes. I then moved to marketing manager for all products, then general manager and chief executive officer. That experience helped me get where I am."

Peck's love for all things mechanical has shone through his life and career, especially developing and engineering road-race motorbikes.

During 1994, he started working on a special project to develop a new farm bike to replace the discontinued TF185.

Following a long process of testing and prototype part manufacturing, Peck developed what was a Japanese domestic trail bike into the iconic DR200SE


Tom Peck is retiring after 38 years with Suzuki NZ

Trojan. This was an exceptional achievement with around 10,000 sales since 1996.

His technical flair and skill set landed him a role in marketing as manager of Suzuki's motorcycle department.

At a time when New Zealand was being swamped by used Japanese imports, it would have been easy to accept the market for what it was.

However, the idea to counter this with new motorbikes at "can't be beaten" prices elevated Suzuki to number one almost overnight.

Following the GSX400X Impulse, the RF900 priced at just $9,995 sold in the hundreds and started a winning streak for Suzuki. It went for more than 20 years as the number-one registered brand on these shores.

Respect for the road-race community is always a theme when talking with Peck, whose passion for two-wheelers goes back to when he was 11 and growing up on a farm.

Working with some of our best racers saw riders such as Andrew Stroud secure 10 titles for Suzuki.

> **It was a nice surprise when Swift sales took off** – Tom Peck

The support wasn't only for the riders, but also event sponsorship, such as the Suzuki Winter Road-Race Series and Boxing Day Cemetery Circuit.

Motocross didn't miss out and it was a young Josh Coppins who first signed to Suzuki in a contract penned by Peck.

Coppins became a world-title contender, narrowly being pipped for a second spot during the World Motocross Championships in 2022.

The following year, Peck expanded the marketing responsibilities to include developing the motor-vehicle division.

Since that time, he has been instrumental in growing Suzuki from 1,200 units per annum to record results of more than 8,000 units in some years.

It was also during this time that the Swift became a success story with sales improving, not only by market share but by the dealer network.

"We've kept Swift sales rolling along," Peck told Autofile during an interview in 2019. "Having it as the number-one light car in the country and being number one for two-wheeled motorbikes are other career highlights, as is working with some of the most talented people in the industry and multiple Kiwi motorcycle champions.

"I think the Swift's popularity is because of how we introduced it. We made its marketing fun. No-one else was doing that at the time and we made it good value for money.

"We saw the new Swift some 12 months before it hit the market and thought it would sell quite well, but we didn't think it would go straight to number-one light car. It was a nice surprise when Swift sales took off."

Peck's passion for motorsport flowed across to Suzuki's motor-vehicle division helping to develop the highly successful Swift Sport Cup with Paul Burborough from the Winger Group.

This one-make series was highly competitive and proved to be a great arena for young talent to develop their skills.

In 2011, Peck was promoted to chief executive officer and guided Suzuki NZ through some difficult territory after the global financial crisis. It's one of the few company-owned distributors that do not have a resident Japanese staff member.

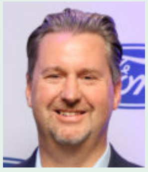
"At one stage, we had a Japanese managing director visit from Melbourne once a month," says Peck. "But we no longer have that link and report directly to Japan.

"Perhaps New Zealand was the test case to see how it would work without a Japanese director as we are one of the better-performing markets in terms of market share."

In 2018, marine made a welcome return to the company after 20 years. Since then, market share has more than doubled.

As for his retirement, Peck is moving across the Tasman to be closer to his two daughters. Few will be surprised to see him at the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix at Phillip Island.

Industry movers



SIMON RUTHERFORD is stepping down as managing director of Ford New Zealand to take on a new role with the marque. He will continue in his current position in the short term to help manage the transition.

Since his appointment to Ford NZ's top job in 2016, he has guided it to record sales levels, including light-commercial segment leadership and overall Ranger market leadership.

A new role for Rutherford, who is president of the Motor Industry Association, and his replacement at the company will be announced in due course.

He has spent more than 25 years with Ford Motor Company. Prior to arriving in New Zealand, he was manager of global order to delivery in the US. Rutherford's past positions with the blue oval have taken him to China, Thailand and the UK.

MAC PASSMORE has been appointed as chief executive officer at AutoFlip NZ, an online wholesale motor-vehicle marketplace.

Passmore, who started his new role on April 2 based in Christchurch, previously worked for Trade Me for 13 years with his most recent position there being operations manager of Trade Me Motors.

He started there as a regional manager for Treat Me in 2011 before becoming national sales manager of motors.

"I'm truly excited by the way AutoFlip is leveraging technology to streamline the process for wholesaling cars," he says. "It offers dealers a real opportunity to be more efficient while maximising margins."

KYM MELLOW has been unveiled as Inchcape NZ's general manager following Wallis Dumper's departure from the company. He is responsible for the overall performance of operations here.

He joined Inchcape in 2023 as franchise director for bravoauto in Australia and has supported the group's broader retail operations as head of sales in Melbourne.

Mellow has more than two decades' industry experience, including 17 years at Mazda Australia as a member of the executive team for most of that time. His roles have included national manager of customer support, vehicle operations and customer experience, state manager for Victoria, and dealer business manager for South Australia and Tasmania.

TIM BARNS-LAWTON has become general manager for Subaru of NZ. He is responsible for its business performance and supporting the retailer network.

Barns-Lawton has been with the business since March 2005 when he joined as sales co-ordinator and has since held various roles. He was most recently general manager of business development and operations, which he was appointed to in 2020.

HAMDY ELSHANTOURY has joined Maserati as its head of a new region, which covers New Zealand.

The marque now has five regions. These are the US and Canada, Europe, China, Japan and South Korea, and the newly created one.

TO FEATURE IN INDUSTRY MOVERS EMAIL EDITOR@AUTOFILE.CO.NZ

The Kia EV9

Global female panel votes for car of year

Seventy-five female motoring journalists from 52 countries across five continents have chosen their world's best car for 2024 and it's the Kia EV9.

Fittingly, the recognition coincided with celebrating International Women's Day on March 8.

The occasion empowers females, while the Women's World Car of the Year (WWCOTY) acknowledges the connection between personal autonomy and vehicles.

Prior to casting their votes, the journalists tested numerous models and evaluated various aspects.

Among the 63 contenders, category winners emerged after initial voting. These were Volvo's EX30 – family car, BMW's Series 5 – large car, the EV9 – SUV, Volkswagen's Amarok – pick-up and four-by-four, and Aston Martin's DB12 – exclusive car.

"This year was particularly difficult due to the excellent level of all candidates," says Marta Garcia, executive president of WWCOTY.

"Each of the finalists had sufficient merit to win. The EV9 won out over its rivals because it's a vehicle capable of satisfying the needs of consumers everywhere."

She adds the vote "overwhelmingly" favoured the Kia as the leading choice in the realm of electric SUVs.

Notably, the EV9 showcases a cutting-edge design, incorporates advanced technology, and offers both bi-directional charging and ultra-fast charging capabilities.

This year's recognition for the marque follows the triumph of Kia's Niro as the 2023 WWCOTY.

The voting criteria are based on the same principles that guide any driver when choosing a vehicle.

The jurors don't select a "woman's car'" because vehicles aren't gender specific. Aspects such as safety, quality, price, design, ease of driving, benefits and environmental footprint are considered.

The awards also aim to give visibility to women in the automotive world and to contribute to female voices being heard on all continents because mobility means access to many personal and professional possibilities.

Sandy Myhre

The awards were created in 2009 by New Zealand motoring journalist Sandy Myhre, who is now honorary president of the WWCOTY.

She's also the author of six books – four on motor racing, one on how to buy a vehicle and one non-fiction book, which she says has "absolutely nothing to do with cars". It's called Whanau Tautoko.

Myhre was a motor-racing correspondent for Newstalk ZB and Radio Sport for 20 years, and is a former British and current New Zealand economy driving record-holder.

She was the first female member of the NZ Motoring Writers' Guild and was made a life member in 2015. She was also the first female member and first president of the NZ Motor Sport Media Association.

Myhre is now semi-retired and, along with Sydney-based journalist Liz Swanton, she pens wenchesonadventures.blog, which covers cars, food and travel.

Catch up with video advertising

At the end of a long day, how do you wind down? Most Kiwis probably get home and lose themselves on a screen be it a television, laptop or cellphone.

Nowadays, everything we want to watch is at our fingertips, on-demand, so we're spending more time than ever consuming video content.

When we put on our marketer's hat, we realise the place to be if we want to advertise a product or offer is in amongst that video where customers are immersed in content they love.

Video is one of the most effective forms of advertising as it's eye-catching, engaging and can reach a wide audience.

Modern platforms also offer intelligent targeting capabilities that enable us to get messages out to those likely to be most receptive to clicking through to the website and converting.

In addition, reporting that can be obtained from video campaigns enables us to see and understand exactly how our budget is performing and adjust it to get the best return on our investment.

In 2024, there are three key digital-video advertising options that we see as being the most effective and delivering the best performance for car dealers – catch-up television, display and YouTube.

JAMES HENDRY
National account director
AdTorque Edge NZ

CATCH-UP TV

Catch-up television is rapidly gaining popularity here with 1.5 million Kiwis each week enjoying the convenience of watching their favourite Sky and Freeview shows at times and places that suit them.

It delivers campaigns to a large, engaged audience watching popular programmes, such as Married At First Sight and Shortland Street.

Furthermore, adverts on this platform have excellent completion rates with 98 per cent viewed until the end. This means the format offers stronger memory recall than other digital platforms, such as Facebook and YouTube.

The only downside to running a catch-up TV campaign is targeting options aren't quite as refined as some other digital formats. This just means, however, the goals of these campaigns tend to be broader and awareness-based as opposed to targeted messaging.

DISPLAY VIDEO

Like mini-billboards, display video ads grab attention and present your offer to prospective clients as they scroll through content on popular sites such as Stuff, Driven and Trade Me.

They allow you to reach up to 80 per cent of Kiwis while leaving a lasting impression with short and engaging videos. Driving awareness 46 per cent faster than static display ads, this format is perfect for ensuring prospective customers know about your offer.

The only consideration when including display video advertising in your marketing campaign is that it doesn't always deliver direct conversions, meaning it's usually best paired with a strong retargeting strategy.

YOUTUBE CAMPAIGNS

YouTube delivers its users a mostly free, on-demand universe of entertainment and knowledge.

For 48 per cent of New Zealanders, it's their daily go-to destination for music videos, how-to guides and reviews.

Its targeting capabilities are its biggest drawcard for advertisers with an ability to drill down on audiences and present ads to select sets of people.

A dealership's ad, for example, can appear in front of shoppers researching cars as well as car enthusiasts.

With engaging ads, the platform offers great conversion rates from genuine buyers to deliver an 80 per cent increased likelihood of purchase if a YouTube ad is seen after visiting the business' website.

The main thing to be considered when initiating a YouTube campaign is the need to invest in quality, engaging creative that will grab attention. It's also vital to develop a strong, well-considered targeting strategy to ensure you're hitting the right audience with your offer.

So, as you wrap up your day on the couch, take note of the video ads you come across and ponder whether this highly engaging format might be worth considering for upcoming campaigns.

Class for smaller models needed

As a passionate advocate for sustainable transport in New Zealand, I believe we are at a pivotal moment when we must reassess our vehicle classification system to align with our goals.

We should, I think, introduce a new LF classification that extends the current LE – motor tricycle – class to four-wheelers.

This would allow New Zealand to take advantage of different types of ultra-light vehicles being developed.

An LF class should encapsulate a new breed of models – lighter and smaller than traditional cars, yet offering enhanced stability compared to powered tricycles and motorbikes.

Inspired by the success of the European Union's quadricycle framework, which is seeing significant growth, this LF class would cater for smaller electric and hybrid vehicles, nurturing innovation and ecological responsibility.

Of course, I do recognise this definition would include, but not be limited to, quadricycles as defined by the EU so we shouldn't call them such.

The rationale for not simply adopting the EU's definitions is twofold. First up, the latter keeps expanding its quadricycle class to accommodate innovation.

Secondly, New Zealand imports cars from numerous jurisdictions and we need to keep our classifications broad to accommodate this.

An LF class, defined as a four-wheeled version of the LE class, keeps our options open to current and future innovation.

Lightweight vehicles, and lightweighting in general, are key to achieving our collective goals of reducing energy, cutting emissions and minimising resource consumption.

In congested urban areas, their compact design can address traffic and parking challenges, improving the overall driving experience. Smaller vehicles, quite simply, require less resources to build and operate.

In championing the LF class, I see New Zealand as paving the way for a significant reduction in its environmental footprint, aligning transport policies with our ecological commitments while also broadening consumer choice.

Renault's Twizy

Citroen's Ami

In order to become less unsustainable, cars – like most modern conveniences – require us to work for progressive improvement.

We've already seen many arguments that a sustainable future will require us to move away from vehicles altogether, but I don't think New Zealand will be in a position to forego personal transportation in the near or even distant future.

While active modes and public transport are part of the solution,

KIT WILKERSON
Head of policy and strategy
kit@via.org.nz

these will not work for all needs nor all people. Instead of fewer vehicles, we need to be looking at and enabling a philosophy of "less car".

While the crashworthiness of lightweight vehicles is a common counter-argument, I believe in viewing the issue from a balanced standpoint.

Lighter vehicles, by their nature, exert less force in collisions, potentially reducing the impact on other road users and infrastructure.

I would go so far as to argue that bigger cars, while obviously safer for occupants, shift that risk to other road users. The only way to actually reduce risk in the entire system is to reduce the mass of the fleet.

It's worth noting that I'm not really proposing something new because there are many vehicles on New Zealand's roads that would already fall into the LF class.

While many of these are classified as MA, they wouldn't meet the latest standards for MA. Older Minis, for example, would likely not meet modern crashworthiness standards.

In fact, arguably, newer light vehicles would take advantage of modern materials and design considerations.

More interesting perhaps are the new vehicles that could be offered to New Zealand.

An example of an upcoming model would be the Xbus currently in development in the Europe, which might be an ideal alternative for tradies especially with its ability to change functional modules and batteries based on need. This vehicle will be available in the UK, so right-hand-drive versions will be available.

There are also many "city cars" with limited speed capabilities that, while less universally useful, would be a more affordable option for urban use.

Examples of these include the Citroen Ami, Ark Zero, Aixam Coupe and Crossover, or even Renault's Twizy.

An LF classification would open new options for our industry, spur innovation and broaden consumer choices, particularly appealing to those who value affordability and environmental sustainability.

It's also worth noting this would also align with road-user charge exemptions for owners of electric vehicles that weigh less than 1,000kg, which would be appealing to consumers who don't need bigger cars.

Introducing an LF vehicle classification in New Zealand is a strategic and progressive step toward addressing the intertwined challenges of sustainability, urban mobility and safety.

Despite concerns regarding crashworthiness, the overarching benefits of lightweight models, particularly in terms of their reduced potential for causing harm, shouldn't be overlooked.

Bill targets electric uptake

The Green Party's spokesperson for transport wants to improve electric vehicle (EV) uptake by removing fringe benefit tax (FBT) for five years from zero-emitting models included in employees' salary packages.

Julie Anne Genter says her member's bill is a chance for government to plug the gap in EV incentives.

The Income Tax (Clean Transport FBT Exclusions) Amendment Bill was drawn from the ballot on March 21. It now awaits its first parliamentary reading after which it's likely to go to the transport and infrastructure select committee.

Genter says the draft legislation aims to provide a financial incentive for employers to buy new EVs as company cars.

She explains: "This bill is an opportunity for the government to address a glaring hole in its plan to electrify the fleet and meet its own commitment to reducing emissions.

"The percentage of EVs coming into the country has plummeted since the government repealed the clean car discount, and the industry has warned the high rate of road-user charges applied to EVs from April will further disincentivise the switch to low-carbon vehicles.

"This bill would also build on progress the Greens made last term when the Labour government adopted an amendment of mine that saw bicycles, electric bicycles and other low-emissions transport exempt from FBT when used for commuting."

Julie Anne Genter

Genter notes most new vehicles imported are bought by businesses, so incentivising them will mean more EVs becoming available in the second-hand market in a few years.

She adds the policy is unlikely to have major revenue implications and is a temporary measure.

The EV Leadership Group, established by Simon Bridges when he was Minister of Transport, recommended a similar FBT exclusion and National campaigned on the policy in 2020 while in opposition.

"Now they can vote for my bill to ensure New Zealand maintains the momentum in transitioning the fleet to low-emissions vehicles, which is an essential action needed to meet our climate commitments," says Genter.

"I'm thrilled the bill was drawn. It's perfect timing given the notable absence of effective coalition policies to transition to a climate-friendly transport system."

Her bill includes removing FBT from public-transport passes provided to staff as a part of their packages. Currently, providing employees with free car parking doesn't attract the tax if the spaces are on-site, so removing the FBT from public-transport passes "would level the playing field".

The bill also clarifies that a double-cab ute be treated as a car when it comes to FBT rules.

The month that was... April

April 27, 1998

Mitsubishi plans staged closure

Mitsubishi Motors New Zealand (MMNZ) planned what it described as a step-down closure of its Todd Park assembly facility in Porirua.

Instead of the plant continuing at full strength until June 19, 1998 – the date already announced for its last vehicle – the schedule would be a continuation of a procedure begun in 1997 when L200 assembly ceased and was replaced with the Triton, which was built in Thailand.

At that time, 110 jobs were shed. Another 250 employees would go progressively over the next two months to leave the company with 90 staff. Todd Park produced the Galant and Lancer cars, and the L300 van.

Denford McDonald, MMNZ's acting chief executive, scotched rumours the closure of the plant north of Wellington was the first step in it exiting the New Zealand market.

"Mitsubishi Motors New Zealand will remain as a CBU [completely built-up] importer and distributor in this country," he said.

"We're not trying to take an assembly-based operation and prune it. Rather, we are taking the chance to start fresh as much as we can.

"We are looking at all our internal activities and ensuring only essential activities remain. At the end of the day, customers dictate the market and they expect change."

April 21, 2006

New minister needed

The resignation of David Parker, Minister of Transport, resulted in caretaker minister Pete Hodgson looking after the important energy and transport portfolios.

Key figures in the car industry believed it was time for a permanent appointment to be made so there was certainty on major issues. Inevitably, when a caretaker minister was in charge, day-to-day issues were dealt with. But policy initiatives tended to go on the backburner.

The mandatory fitting of immobilisers and whole of vehicle marketing (WoVM) for all imports into New Zealand had been announced as policy, but the industry had no hard facts on which to plan.

While industry groups had serious doubts about the cost benefits of WoVM, there was a need for certainty and time to prepare for introducing any compulsory programme.

In the meantime, Australia had halved its vehicle theft rate in five years, largely attributed to the fitting of immobilisers.

The concern was the industry would have inadequate consultation on controversial policy initiatives until a permanent minister was appointed.

April 12, 1999

Service stations become supermarkets

Another step in transforming the service station business was to happen in the next month when supermarket shopping at garages became a reality.

Woolworths and BP NZ were to open two joint-venture supermarkets at BP locations. They would be housed within what was the normal product display areas in service stations in Herne Bay and Lincoln, west Auckland.

Following a brief period of evaluation, the concept would spread throughout the rest of the country at other BP-owned sites.

The supermarkets would stock around 3,000 leading product lines, concentrating on popular and convenience items such as partly prepared meals.

Woolworths and BP carried out extensive research of the concept in the UK, Portugal and Australia, and believed they had come up with the right ideas for Kiwis.

While it might have been expected this type of joint venture would have resulted in petrol being sold at supermarkets, planning and resource consent problems here made that too difficult.

However, research showed there was a definite niche for combining two types of shopping on service station sites.

April 27, 2007

Toyota world's largest carmaker

Toyota had overtaken General Motors (GM) to become the world's biggest automotive manufacturer.

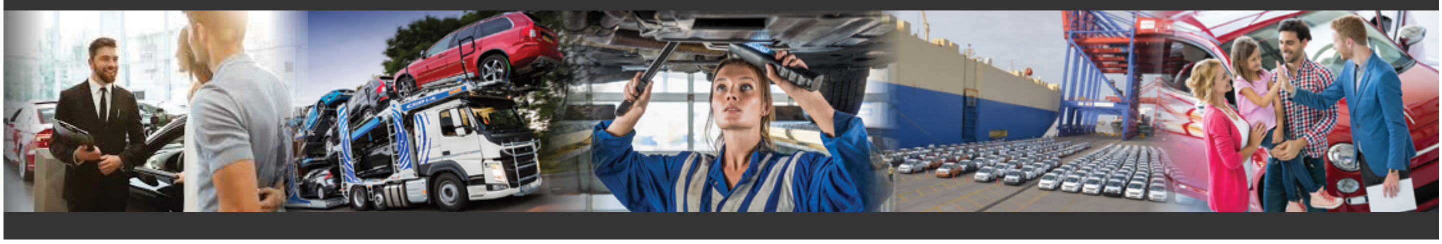
According to figures released by the Japanese company, it sold 2.348 million vehicles in the first three months of 2007. GM was estimated to have sold 2.26m cars and small trucks during the same period.

Toyota had enjoyed strong sales on the back of the success of the pioneering Prius, as well as new models of popular ranges such as the Camry and Corolla.

In the US, GM was struggling to compete as high fuel prices continued to drive people away from buying larger vehicles and it had shown signs of distress by cutting thousands of jobs and closing factories.

GM was looking to step up its results from the first quarter. The Chinese market was one avenue it was exploring where the marque was already market leader with sales of 876,000 units in 2006 through its joint ventures.

Toyota spokesman Paul Nolasco said dominating GM wasn't top of the company's list of priorities. "Our goal has never been to sell the most cars in the world. We simply want to be the best in quality."



Directory covers industry training

Last year, the Motor Trade Association proudly launched its Learning Directory, a comprehensive platform designed to consolidate various training providers into a single, easily accessible location.

This initiative aims to streamline learning opportunities for automotive businesses across 10 key portfolios.

These include business efficiency, human resources and employment relations, health and safety, mental health and wellbeing, and vehicle compliance.

The remainder are new talent pre-trade and apprenticeship, emerging technologies and continuous development, literacy and numeracy, customer experience and sales, and environmental sustainability.

Within this directory, more than 150 training opportunities are available. They cover a diverse range of topics essential for keeping businesses and their staff up to date on key regulation requirements or to assist in the upskilling of personnel within your business.

From mastering Google's business tools to maximising value from your marketing investments, navigating the Privacy Act and privacy-breach reporting, minimising conflict in the workplace, health and safety essentials, dealing with difficult customers and insights into industry-specific initiatives, such as the Tyrewise programme, the training available caters to a variety of technical and professional needs.

LARRY FALLOWFIELD
Sector manager – dealers, Motor Trade Association

In addition to facilitating access to existing training, the MTA has been actively engaged in strategic collaborations to shape future vocational education.

Loretta Thompson, the association's dedicated learning and development manager, has been working with some MTA members and Hanga Aro Rau Workforce Development Council (WDC) to identify industry-specific training needs.

An electric and hybrid vehicle apprenticeship is among three potential qualifications that have emerged from industry collaboration

The primary emphasis has been on renewing or introducing qualifications specifically tailored to the automotive sector, and the aim of this is facilitating the upskilling of existing personnel or engaging new individuals to the industry.

Three potential qualifications have emerged from industry collaboration and they are all at New Zealand Certificate level four. They are an electric and hybrid vehicle apprenticeship, automotive sales, and grooming and detailing.

Through member discussions and database research, a previous qualification in vehicle sales from MITO surfaced.

Despite recently low uptake, recent and ongoing industry changes have emphasised its renewed significance with regulations.

These include compliant access to the motor-vehicle register and annual reporting related to it, privacy training, understanding the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act, Consumer Guarantees Act, vehicle emissions and energy economy labels, and safety ratings to name a few.

And now road-user charges for battery electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids can be added into the mix.

I believe that comprehensive training in automotive sales has become essential and, as technologies such as electrified vehicles become more mainstream, correct training will become essential for businesses.

Recognising the importance of industry input, the MTA has taken a proactive stance in advocating for relevant qualifications.

By engaging with the WDC and initiating upcoming surveys among our members, we are seeking to gauge interest and ascertain the potential value of these certifications to automotive companies.

These efforts aim to provide first-hand evidence of industry demands, thereby influencing WDC priorities in introducing or reintroducing qualifications aligned with the our needs.

The MTA's commitment to fostering continuous learning and development is represented through initiatives such as the Learning Directory and strategic partnerships with organisations like the WDC.

By facilitating access to an array of training opportunities and advocating for industry-specific qualifications, we are endeavouring to empower business owners with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in a dynamic and competitive landscape.

If you're not an MTA member but would like to have your say and be a part of the association's survey, please email me at larry.fallowfield@mta.org.nz.

Motoring into electric era

The Solterra's cabin

Kiwis are finally getting behind the wheel of Subaru's much-anticipated all-electric SUV.

The all-new Solterra boasts durability, advanced technology, and sits size-wise roughly between a Forester and Outback.

As is the case with some launches of models in the past few years, there have been challenges in getting the battery electric vehicle (BEV) to our shores.

With this car, there have also been "intricacies" that come with a joint venture – in this case with Toyota for its bZ4X.

"The Solterra embodies a significant step-change for Subaru on its journey towards a more sustainable future and drive into a new era – electrification," says Wally Dumper, outgoing managing director of Subaru NZ.

He adds that we have never seen so much change in the industry than in the past five years.

"Hybrid and battery electric vehicles have taken the automotive world by storm and shaken up what was a relatively consistent market, bringing a variety of government legislation, rebates and taxes in their wake.

"But this has been an exciting new challenge and, with the Solterra, we continue that step in the new direction."

Staying true to Subaru's DNA, the Solterra has all-wheel drive (AWD). Its all-terrain prowess is enhanced by dual function X-Mode, 210mm of ground clearance and intelligent safety features.

Coming in two variants – the entry-level model, which starts at $79,990, and the Solterra Touring from $84,990 – the SUV includes a 12.3-inch touchscreen with satellite navigation, Safety Sense technology, wireless phone charging and a panoramic 360-degree view monitor.

Equipped with dual electric motors front and rear, alongside a 71.4kW lithium-ion battery, the Solterra delivers maximum power output of 160kW and 337Nm of torque. It has a NEDC test range of 485km.

The SUV has AC and DC-charging capability. Charging from 20 to 80 per cent is via a 150kW DC charger and takes around 30 minutes, and seven to eight hours with a single phase 7kW AC charger.

FROM RALLY TO ROAD

The all-new Impreza has been redesigned from the ground up with a new standard of technology, styling and capability.

Now in its sixth generation, it has been recreated with a focus on delivering a sportier and more versatile offering for drivers.

Priced from $44,990, the hatchback boasts symmetrical AWD and a two-litre direct-injection Boxer engine.

There's satellite navigation via the 11.6-inch touchscreen, wireless phone charging and wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, Subaru Vision Assist, driver monitoring, leather upholstery with heated front seats, 18-inch alloys, a 360-degree view monitor and electric sunroof.

"Historically, the rally-inspired performance and reliability of the Impreza captured the hearts of enthusiasts in New Zealand," says Dumper.

"Fast forward to 2024 and the latest version still offers superior handling in all conditions, underpinned by AWD and encapsulated in a sporty design. Latest advancements mean it features the most modern safety tech, reliability and retained value."

The Impreza's engine is matched to a lineartronic transmission with an eight speed paddle-shift manual mode.

Subaru's improved global platform instils a greater sense of confidence, bolstering cabin strength and helping to deliver a quieter, more comfortable ride.

The car comes equipped with the latest generation of the marque's driver-assist system with an improved stereo camera and a new wide-angle monocular camera. Enhanced functionality includes a significantly wider field of view, speed-sign recognition and lane centring.

The sixth-generation Impreza

'Outrageous' levels of performance

The South Island's tranquillity has been reverberating to the motorsport engine notes of Rodin Cars' FZERO hypercar.

Its concept was first revealed last year. Now it has entered the test and development phase after being manufactured in New Zealand.

The FZERO rolling onto the brand's own test track represents a huge milestone, not only for the project but also for Rodin Cars as a whole.

Having successfully developed the FZED open-wheel, single-seat track vehicle, it describes the FZERO as "more ambitious by magnitudes".

It has been designed at Rodin Cars' headquarters near Mount Lyford, a 45-minute drive from Kaikoura. It boasts three purpose-built test circuits and a high-tech production facility.

The FZERO is being track-tested

The driving force behind the company – and the designer of the FZERO and its bespoke twin-turbocharged V10 – is David Dicker.

The technology billionaire and keen racer personally took to the wheel for its first outing, and was impressed by its performance and durability.

"While there's a long road ahead of testing and development, running the FZERO for the first time gives me immense pride in what everyone at Rodin Cars has achieved in bringing this programme to life," he says.

"We're excited as the project enters its next phase. It really is a car like no other."

The hypercar, which has a closed cockpit, promises "outrageous" levels of performance and dynamism.

The company is aiming for it to challenge established track-only models from Aston Martin, Gordon Murray Automotive and Mercedes-AMG.

That said, the primary focus of the FZERO is to deliver a driving experience "like no other, tapping into the raw emotion of speed and visceral performance".

Its four-litre engine – known as the RC.TEN – develops 755kW of power at 9,500rpm, while only using 11psi of boost. A naturally aspirated iteration is presently in development and will power the hypercar to a top speed of 360kph.

After two prototype engines were built in the UK by Neil Brown Engineering, the RC.TEN's development and manufacturing shifted in-house at Rodin Cars.

In a further development, the company intends to offer it as a crate motor for motorsport applications.

Parts to provide boost

A marque plans to enhance its electric-vehicle ownership experience with N Performance Parts.

Continuing on from models with internal combustion engines, such as the i30 N and i20 N, Hyundai plans to offer specialised tuning components for its all-electric N models.

These include the Ioniq 5 N with its NPX1 concept previewing enhancements that will soon be available from a catalogue of N Performance Parts.

This model features a carbon front splitter, side skirts, rear diffuser, rear-wing spoiler, lightweight hybrid carbon wheels, high-performance brake pads and lowering springs.

Prototype N Performance Parts applied to the NPX1 will be developed in preparation for sales this year.

Joon Park, vice-president of N Brand's management group, says: "Not limited to tuning parts, we're developing customisation such as sound and vehicle calibration by over-the-air updates. This will open a new category of EV customisation."

The NPX1

Shane van Gisbergen in action on Chicago's street circuit

Kiwi making his mark in US

Shane van Gisbergen is living his own dream from Hollywood flick Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby.

Arriving as a rookie in the mauling, brawling madness of NASCAR, he races in the step-up Xfinity Series.

The 34-year-old has posted a 12th, third place, did not finish and, most recently, a sixth, surging out of nowhere to tackle the Americans at their own tin-top game.

Ending his V8 Supercar career with nothing left to prove, he started with a "toe in the water" drive and victory in Chicago last July.

A leveller for anyone trying to get a feel for NASCAR, that race was new to the series and, being on the city's streets, the circuit didn't come with the extreme speeds and risks of oval courses.

Three-time Supercars champion Van Gisbergen had earmarked Chicago right from the minute it was announced.

After a few months of negotiations with team owner Justin Marks, he became the second driver for Project 91 following in the footsteps of Formula One world champion Kimi Raikkonen.

The Project 91 Camaro is run by Trackhouse Racing for drivers to drop in and run races in the NASCAR Cup Series.

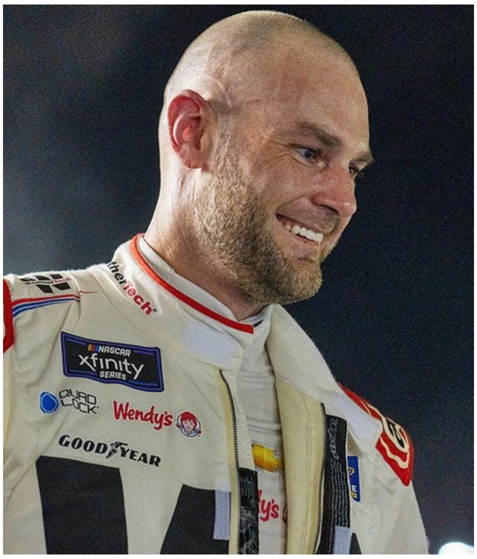
Raikkonen was the first driver in that vehicle, running at Watkins Glen International, New York, in 2023 and at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas, earlier this year. Van Gisbergen was number two.

"When I spoke with Justin, we had targeted it," says the New Zealander. "I think it was pretty amazing to be considered. After seeing who they had last year with Kimi, I didn't think I would be on the shortlist so that's pretty flattering.

"While it suited me with how many street circuits we raced in Australia, it wasn't going to be easy."

The rest is history. Van Gisbergen absolutely nailed his outing in Chicago, winning on debut in a car more brutal than anything he had driven to date.

While Van Gisbergen is now contracted to Trackhouse Racing, he has been placed with Kaulig Racing – with which the Justin Marks-owned squad has an alliance – for his 33 Xfinity races and the minimum eight he will contest at the separate NASCAR Cup level.



Van Gisbergen was victorious in his NASCAR debut last year

He has never raced oval circuits before. "I've experienced three different types of tracks now, and every week is a massive challenge and learning curve," he told Autofile.

The Xfinity vehicles retain h-pattern shifting rather than sequential. While h-patterns were still a feature of Supercars when Van Gisbergen made his debut with Team Kiwi Racing in mid-2007, left-hand drive has brought another unexpected challenge.

"It's been hard now in the h-pattern. Sequential is easy. My rally car was sequential. But at Daytona, the second-to-third shift, going across the gate… I don't think I've ever used that muscle before, so shifting with the right hand on an h-pattern has been difficult."

NASCAR has little in the way of opportunies to practice, which puts a new driver and oval-racing rookie at a disadvantage.

Fortunately, it has embraced simulator racing technology and drivers spend hours learning circuits in realistic rigs.

Van Gisbergen says the immense technology and engineering investments are largely hidden from view. "It's a shame really, the fans deserve to see more of the behind-the-scenes effort."

Another big shift in emphasis has been NASCAR's lenient track limit, or track edge, rules.

While the V8 Supercars Championship is vigilant in policing limits and applying penalties when drivers leave the track area, NASCAR is far less so with the Circuit of the Americas being an example.

"Normally, we're trying everything we can to stay within the lines," explains Van Gisbergen.

"In NASCAR, they are off the track more than they are on it. Except for the esses, which are the only parts they police. For the rest of it, it seems like everyone just takes the piss and cuts all the corners, going out wide.

"It has taken me a lot of adjusting to get to mid-corner, and just gas it up and aim off the track. I've spent all my life trying to stay on it and it's very different the way the rules are, but it's pretty fun."

In the wet, he notes that the weightier NASCAR cars require a more deliberate driving style.

"They are 300kg heavier than what I'm used to, so they feel dead and quite slippery. They take a bit more stopping and it's important to flow through the corners being real smooth."

Van Gisbergen is enjoying the transition. "Everything is subtly different. Everyone's really friendly over here. It's not like back home where people are either Ford or Holden and now, of course, Chev."

Visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=qA0J63mkCy0 for track action of the final laps from the New Zealander's NASCAR debut in Chicago.

Armstrong secures GTs victory

Rick Armstrong has clinched the Summerset GT New Zealand Championship Open class title with Brock Gilchrist winning the GT4s.

The lead for the championship changed multiple times during the 15-race season.

Armstrong eventually claimed top spot on the points table from Sam Filmore in second place with Luke Manson finishing third.

"It was close all of the way," says Armstrong. "Among our International Motorsport team members, there was some incredibly close racing.

"I had some up-and-down results across the five rounds, but I feel like I was a points gatherer and the win was due to the demise of others as well.

"It's about being consistent. My approach going into the season

Rick Armstrong jostles for the lead with Paul Pedersen

was to drive consistently and keep my nose out of trouble.

"If it was looking like trouble, I would deliberately not go there. I really enjoyed the season and it was a lot of fun."

Gilchrist won the GT4 class in his Giltrap Motorsport McLaren 570S, picking up a number of wins and consistent podium finishes, which contributed to his championship win.

Armstrong in action

"Obviously, I'm over the moon to be crowned GT4 champion," he says. "It has been a really enjoyable championship and I'm stoked to win.

"It was tough this round and to fight back with the long compulsory pitstop time, but a huge thanks to the team and sponsors. It's such an awesome scholarship that they've put together and it's truly amazing."

The final GT4 championship standings saw the Mercedes-AMG of James Sax finish second with the BMW of Garth Piesse place third.

With three races held over one weekend at Hampton Downs, Clay Osborne won the one-hour race on March 16 in the open class, with Regan Scoullar and Paul Southam picking up wins in the two 30-minute races.

In the GT4, James Sax won the one-hour and 30-minute races after Garth Piesse won that morning's 30-minute outing.

Paddon confirmed for championship season

As he develops plans for international competition this year, Hayden Paddon has confirmed he will contest the New Zealand Rally Championship (NZRC).

The announcement is a significant boost for the six-round series with organisers also having confirmed the addition of the Southern Lights Rally based in Invercargill and contested on iconic Southland roads.

This year's championship, which is sponsored by the Brian Green Property Group, runs separately in the north and south.

It begins at the traditional season-opening Otago Rally from April 13-14 before Rally South Canterbury, which is a month earlier than usual on May 11.

The Southern Lights Rally takes place on June 22 before a nearly three-month break during the middle of the year.

North Island rounds begin on September 14 with the Daybreaker Rally based out of the Manawatu before the Rally Bay of Plenty on October 5. The championship concludes with International Rally of Whangarei from November 8-10.

Elton Goonan, MotorSport NZ's chief executive, says a six-round

Hayden Paddon will contest the six-round New Zealand Rally Championship

series with the addition of a rally in Southland shows the sport is alive and growing in this country.

"Confirmation the Daybreaker and Bay of Plenty events are back again after a triumphant return, along with the rest of the great events that have become staples of the championship, will make for another brilliant NZRC season."

Buyer loses claim to reject car after failing to exercise rights within reasonable time


A 1995 Suzuki Jimny

The case: The buyer wanted to reject her 1995 Suzuki Jimny after its engine failed four months after purchase. However, she earlier had the cambelt replaced by a friend who didn't perform diagnostic tests. The trader had incorrectly told the purchaser the car had a new cambelt and had ignored her repair requests.

The decision: The application to reject the car was dismissed. The dealer was ordered to pay her $2,500 for engine damage present at the time of sale.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal via video link.

Background

Rachel Beaton purchased a 1995 Suzuki Jimny for $15,250 from SR Motors Ltd in Auckland on June 26, 2022.

The trader told her its cambelt had been recently replaced, but it was badly worn and needed replacing two months after purchase.

Beaton replaced the part in late September 2022 and about three weeks later the engine failed.

She wanted to reject the car. SR Motors said the damage was most likely caused by the person who replaced the cambelt, so Beaton wasn't entitled to reject the vehicle.

The case

In late August 2022, the Jimny wouldn't start so Beaton asked an acquaintance Jaedyn Lack, an apprentice mechanic with a level-three New Zealand certificate in automotive engineering, to inspect it.

He said the cambelt was old and degraded with missing teeth, and there was "pretty major" cracking between the teeth on the rest of it.

Beaton phoned, emailed and text messaged SR Motors about this but didn't receive a reply before sourcing a replacement cambelt in October 2022.

Lack changed the belt, tensioner, water pump and seals and turned the engine over by hand to ensure no internal components were touching.

He reassembled the engine, took the car for a test drive and considered it was operating normally. He didn't perform further diagnosis to determine if the engine had suffered any damage at that time.

Beaton drove the Suzuki until its engine failed about three weeks and 600km later. SR Motors had it assessed. Zichu Jiang, who appeared for the dealer, said the mechanic found a piston had put a hole in the side of the engine block, which it considered unusual damage.

The trader then had the engine assessed by GER Engine Specialists. Its invoice dated February 28, 2023, stated it stripped the engine and found the inlet valve head on the number-two cylinder had come off the valve stem and "smashed the piston and put a hole in the side of the block".

The specialist considered there were three possible causes of the damage. The cam or engine was turned over during the cambelt replacement resulting in valve-to-piston contact and a bent inlet valve on the number-two cylinder, a foreign object had gone through the inlet system into the combustion chamber or there was a metallurgical failure of the intake valve.

Scott Sampson, of GER Engine Specialists, said when he was told about Lack's evidence, he thought the issue might have been caused by the cambelt's failure.

But he would have expected signs of that engine damage, such as misfires or poor performance, to be immediately present, which they were not. Therefore, he couldn't conclusively diagnose the cause of the engine damage.

On the basis of the repairer's diagnosis and Lack's evidence, SR Motors denied liability as it considered the damage was most likely caused by Lack, who it claimed was an unqualified mechanic who had replaced the cambelt without supervision.

However, prior to purchase, SR Motors had told Beaton the Jimny had a new cambelt.

The finding

The tribunal was satisfied the Jimny wasn't of acceptable quality for the purposes of section six of the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA) because the evidence showed the cambelt hadn't been replaced.

It was also highly likely the engine was damaged when the belt's teeth failed. To remedy that, parts of the engine including the valvetrain would have required reconditioning by removing the cylinder head and replacing all the valves, costing about $2,500.

However, the subsequent and more significant damage didn't breach the CGA's guarantee of acceptable quality because it was most likely caused by Beaton continuing to drive the car when it already had engine damage that should have been identified when the cambelt was replaced.

Had a cylinder leakdown and compression test been performed, problems caused by the worn belt would most likely have been detected.

The tribunal found SR Motors wasn't liable for the engine damage that occurred after the cambelt was replaced.

It also ruled Beaton had lost the right to reject the Suzuki because she didn't exercise that right within a reasonable time and it suffered extensive engine damage unrelated to its condition when supplied.

Beaton knew the cambelt was damaged by late August. At that time, she was entitled to reject the Jimny.

But by not acting when the belt failed, by which time the engine had damage that most likely would have been found if appropriate checks had been performed, and by driving the Jimny with a damaged engine, she lost the right to reject it.

Instead, under section 18 of the CGA, because the damage that occurred when the cambelt failed was of substantial character, Beaton was entitled to obtain damages in compensation for any reduction in value of the vehicle below the price paid at the time that damage occurred.

The tribunal assessed the reduction in value of the Jimny as being the $2,500 cost of repairs when the belt failed.

Orders

The application to reject the Jimny was dismissed. The trader had to pay the buyer $2,500.

Customer entitled to have damage repaired elsewhere after dealer refuses to fix engine

The case: The engine of the buyer's 2010 BMW Z4 needed to be replaced 14 months post-purchase. The trader refused to fix it, so the purchaser sought an order from the tribunal for repair costs.

The decision: The adjudicator ruled the vehicle had a pre-existing fault that caused the oil-pressure warning light to illuminate due to a faulty oil-level sensor that led to significant engine damage. The dealer was ordered to pay $6,563 to the consumer.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal via video link.

Background

Craig Garner bought a 2010 BMW Z4 for $27,485 from Glenfield Wholesale on April 13, 2022. Fourteen months later, he discovered it had major damage.

The dealer refused to repair it, so the buyer paid $6,563 to have the engine replaced and wanted to recover that. The trader claimed the problem occurred too long after purchase for it to have liability.

The case

The BMW had an odometer reading of 80,679km when sold and was serviced by Marshall Automotive before being supplied.

Its invoice noted an oil-pressure light was on. The repairer believed the oil-pressure sensor was faulty and replaced it.

However, when Garner was driving from Auckland to Tauranga on the day of purchase, the oil light illuminated on the dash. He phoned the trader's mechanic who told him it was unlikely to be a concern and to have the BMW checked in Tauranga. The light came on several times during the trip.

The buyer had the Z4 assessed by Pacific Automotive. It diagnosed a faulty oil-pressure sensor and replaced it at the dealer's expense.

But the same warning light illuminated again, so Garner had the BMW assessed by another mechanic before Glenfield Wholesale transported it to Auckland where Marshall Automotive replaced its hydraulic relief valve.

By the end of June 2022, the oil levels fluctuated between low and normal despite no more fluid being put into the car.

The dealer advised the buyer to have the BMW assessed. He took it to Euro Garage, which found an oil-level sensor fault and replaced it at the dealer's expense.

Richard Ross, of Euro Garage, also drained the oil and found that, although its levels were low, the fluid was in good condition with no signs of debris.

Garner regularly checked the oil levels and the gauge always showed a normal range. But on June 13, 2023, he noticed an unusual tapping sound from the engine, which Euro Garage assessed.

Ross noted a noise from the engine's bottom rear. He drained the oil, removed the oil filter, and found metal filings in the fluid and filter. He thought the fragments were from the bottom-end bearing shells and said the most economical repair was to replace the engine.

Garner contacted Glenfield Wholesale, which denied liability, so he bought a second-hand engine for $3,358 and paid $3,205 to Euro Garage for installation. He sought a tribunal order to recover that cost.

In its defence, the trader said the BMW had been serviced before sale when five-and-a-half litres of oil were put into the sump. The car had been assessed by three mechanics before Euro Garage and none found low oil levels.

The dealer was advised by its mechanics that the warning light would have come on if the oil levels were as low as described by Euro Garage and any engine damage wouldn't have been caused by the oil level being low by two litres.

The trader suggested Euro Garage might have contributed to the damage by putting two litres of different oil into the engine in June 2022.

The dealer added that Euro Garage didn't properly diagnose any problems with the engine, and that its determination of big-end bearing damage was "words, guessing and assumption".

Glenfield Wholesale also submitted the buyer didn't give it a reasonable opportunity to assess or repair the BMW.

The finding

The evidence showed the oil-pressure warning light was on before Garner purchased the vehicle. It was likely early stages of engine damage were present by the end of the buyer's journey to Tauranga.

As was later discovered, the oil-level sensors were faulty meaning there was a real risk that if Marshall Automotive had relied on the reading from that sensor when topping up the oil, it might have put less than the required amount into the car.

Glenfield Wholesale also claimed the warning light would have illuminated if the oil levels were low as stated by Euro Garage. Given the faulty oil-level sensor, it was possible the warning light wouldn't come on even if the oil levels were low.

The dealer questioned whether the engine was damaged to the extent found by Euro Garage.

But the tribunal was satisfied it was seriously damaged and that was most likely due to the BMW being driven while the oil pressure was low and or a faulty hydraulic relief valve, which weren't detected until June 2022.

It was probable the low oil pressure led to a lack of engine lubrication and damage to one or more big-end bearings.

The tribunal found the BMW wasn't of acceptable quality for the purposes of section six of the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA).

It had a pre-existing fault that led to significant engine damage, so it wasn't as free of defects when bought as a reasonable person would consider acceptable.

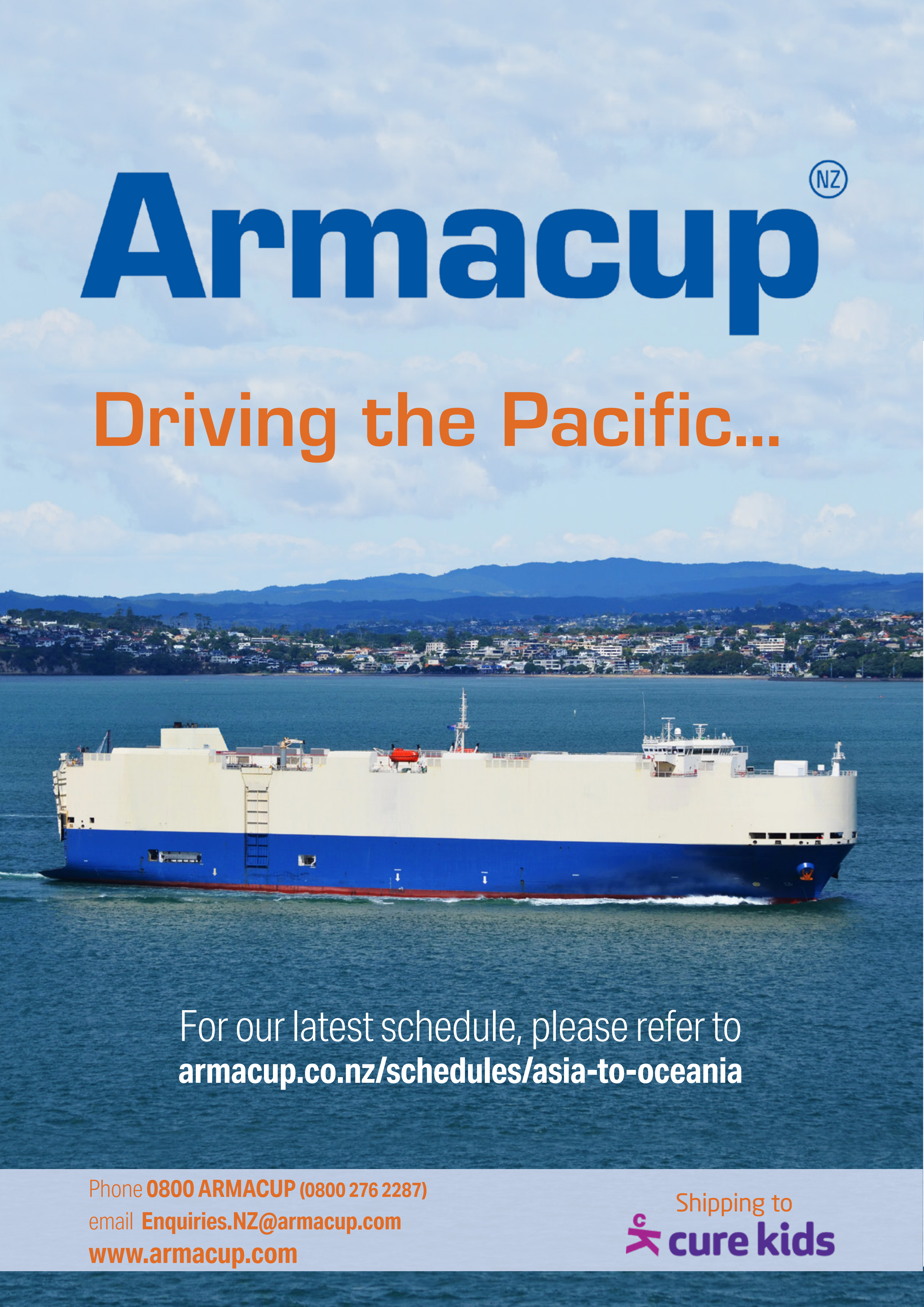
Garner had driven about 9,000km in the car since purchase, which was less than average and not so far that the CGA's protections would have expired.

Under section 18 of the act, Garner was entitled to have the damage fixed elsewhere and recover the cost from the dealer because it had refused to repair the engine.

Order

The trader had to pay $6,563 to the buyer.

A 2010 BMW Z4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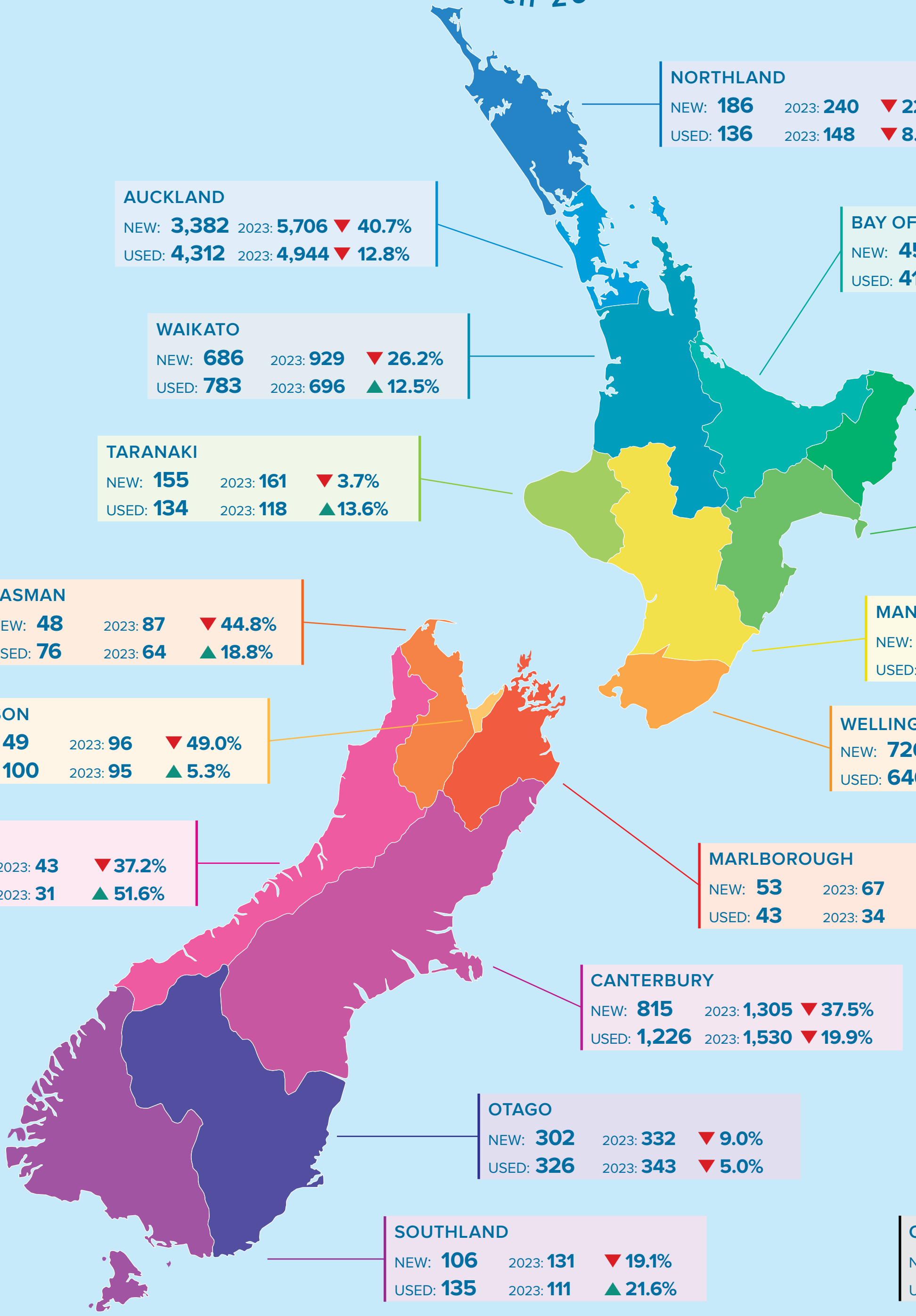
Around the Country
March 2024

Total new cars	
7,561	
2023: 11,603	▼ 34.8%

Total imported used cars	
8,943	
2023: 9,664	▼ 7.5%



	New	2023		Used	2023	
NORTHLAND	186	240	▼ 22.5%	136	148	▼ 8.1%
AUCKLAND	3,382	5,706	▼ 40.7%	4,312	4,944	▼ 12.8%
WAIKATO	686	929	▼ 26.2%	783	696	▲ 12.5%
BAY OF PLENTY	454	589	▼ 22.9%	416	395	▲ 5.3%
GISBORNE	34	89	▼ 61.8%	86	39	▲ 120.5%
TARANAKI	155	161	▼ 3.7%	134	118	▲ 13.6%
HAWKE'S BAY	191	334	▼ 42.8%	198	204	▼ 2.9%
MANAWATU-WHANGANUI	325	437	▼ 25.6%	257	189	▲ 36.0%
WELLINGTON	726	1,034	▼ 29.8%	646	686	▼ 5.8%
TASMAN	48	87	▼ 44.8%	76	64	▲ 18.8%
NELSON	49	96	▼ 49.0%	100	95	▲ 5.3%
WEST COAST	27	43	▼ 37.2%	47	31	▲ 51.6%
MARLBOROUGH	53	67	▼ 20.9%	43	34	▲ 26.5%
CANTERBURY	815	1,305	▼ 37.5%	1,226	1,530	▼ 19.9%
OTAGO	302	332	▼ 9.0%	326	343	▼ 5.0%
SOUTHLAND	106	131	▼ 19.1%	135	111	▲ 21.6%
OTHERS (Chatham Islands, overseas, unknown)	22	23	▼ 4.3%	22	37	▼ 40.5%

Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - March 2024

MAKE	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/-%	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Toyota	3,507	3,898	-10.0	39.2%	10,250	38.4%
Mazda	1,218	1,199	1.6	13.6%	3,771	14.1%
Nissan	1,184	1,448	-18.2	13.2%	3,678	13.8%
Honda	737	687	7.3	8.2%	2,118	7.9%
Subaru	652	535	21.9	7.3%	1,959	7.3%
Suzuki	268	263	1.9	3.0%	768	2.9%
Mitsubishi	247	302	-18.2	2.8%	716	2.7%
BMW	228	264	-13.6	2.5%	683	2.6%
Lexus	193	125	54.4	2.2%	534	2.0%
Volkswagen	170	360	-52.8	1.9%	540	2.0%
Audi	155	189	-18.0	1.7%	484	1.8%
Mercedes-Benz	150	135	11.1	1.7%	442	1.7%
Ford	27	43	-37.2	0.3%	96	0.4%
Land Rover	26	15	73.3	0.3%	100	0.4%
Chevrolet	20	18	11.1	0.2%	40	0.1%
Jeep	19	10	90.0	0.2%	59	0.2%
Dodge	17	8	112.5	0.2%	33	0.1%
Jaguar	15	9	66.7	0.2%	49	0.2%
Volvo	14	21	-33.3	0.2%	47	0.2%
Porsche	13	19	-31.6	0.1%	45	0.2%
Tesla	9	6	50.0	0.1%	21	0.1%
Chrysler	7	9	-22.2	0.1%	23	0.1%
Holden	7	6	16.7	0.1%	15	0.1%
Peugeot	7	6	16.7	0.1%	17	0.1%
Hyundai	6	5	20.0	0.1%	19	0.1%
Mini	6	15	-60.0	0.1%	27	0.1%
Plymouth	5	2	150.0	0.1%	6	0.0%
Kia	4	4	0.0	0.0%	13	0.0%
Alfa Romeo	3	2	50.0	0.0%	12	0.0%
Fiat	3	2	50.0	0.0%	10	0.0%
Bentley	2	0	200.0	0.0%	9	0.0%
Buick	2	2	0.0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Genesis	2	0	200.0	0.0%	5	0.0%
Lotus	2	1	100.0	0.0%	3	0.0%
Pontiac	2	2	0.0	0.0%	5	0.0%
Others	16	54	-70.4	0.2%	71	0.3%
Total	**8,943**	**9,664**	**-7.5**	**100.0%**	**26,670**	**100.0%**

Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - March 2024

MAKE	MODEL	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/-%	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Aqua	1,008	1,468	-31.3	11.3%	2,838	10.6%
Toyota	Prius	772	989	-21.9	8.6%	2,201	8.3%
Mazda	Axela	366	456	-19.7	4.1%	1,199	4.5%
Nissan	Note	362	297	21.9	4.0%	1,085	4.1%
Toyota	Corolla	341	347	-1.7	3.8%	988	3.7%
Mazda	Demio	299	278	7.6	3.3%	890	3.3%
Honda	Fit	284	311	-8.7	3.2%	891	3.3%
Toyota	C-HR	259	195	32.8	2.9%	725	2.7%
Subaru	Impreza	253	231	9.5	2.8%	825	3.1%
Nissan	X-Trail	235	179	31.3	2.6%	813	3.0%
Nissan	Serena	231	249	-7.2	2.6%	778	2.9%
Mazda	CX-5	201	191	5.2	2.2%	634	2.4%
Subaru	XV	192	138	39.1	2.1%	553	2.1%
Suzuki	Swift	189	199	-5.0	2.1%	528	2.0%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	168	209	-19.6	1.9%	448	1.7%
Honda	Vezel	150	82	82.9	1.7%	420	1.6%
Toyota	Vitz	149	149	0.0	1.7%	479	1.8%
Toyota	Camry	126	87	44.8	1.4%	308	1.2%
Volkswagen	Golf	112	236	-52.5	1.3%	353	1.3%
Mazda	Atenza	104	85	22.4	1.2%	296	1.1%
Mazda	Premacy	94	106	-11.3	1.1%	307	1.2%
Toyota	Spade	82	33	148.5	0.9%	274	1.0%
Nissan	Leaf	81	400	-79.8	0.9%	184	0.7%
Toyota	Vellfire	71	23	208.7	0.8%	233	0.9%
Subaru	Forester	68	32	112.5	0.8%	166	0.6%
Toyota	Sai	67	133	-49.6	0.7%	229	0.9%
Lexus	CT 200h	63	26	142.3	0.7%	175	0.7%
Toyota	Wish	62	72	-13.9	0.7%	180	0.7%
Toyota	Auris	56	38	47.4	0.6%	191	0.7%
Toyota	Alphard	55	28	96.4	0.6%	153	0.6%
Nissan	Juke	54	74	-27.0	0.6%	151	0.6%
Subaru	Legacy	54	58	-6.9	0.6%	146	0.5%
BMW	Mini	49	40	22.5	0.5%	121	0.5%
Mazda	CX-3	44	23	91.3	0.5%	128	0.5%
Audi	A3	42	65	-35.4	0.5%	104	0.4%
Others		2,200	2,137	2.9	24.6%	6,676	25.0%
Total		**8,943**	**9,664**	**-7.5**	**100.0%**	**26,670**	**100.0%**

Software firm in new hands

Auto-IT Pty Ltd, a leading provider of dealer-management systems (DMS) in Australasia, has been taken over by the Perseus Operating Group.

Perseus is run by Constellation Software, which has its headquarters in Toronto. It says the purchase of Auto-IT will help expand its global footprint after establishing a presence across North America and in the UK.

The deal is its 10th acquisition to be made in the dealership software market under the Constellation Dealer Group.

Auto-IT provides services to automotive, agriculture, trucking and construction equipment markets, and has been operating for more than 40 years.

Under the deal, it will retain its headquarters in Melbourne and offices in Sydney, Wellington, India and south-east Asia, as well as its partners in South Africa and Mexico.

Wayne Rushworth, chief executive officer of Auto-IT, and Aaran Newman, director of sales and marketing, will continue to lead the business in their current roles.

"We searched for a strategic partner with a similar value set and culture that will allow Auto-IT to continue to focus on its customers and realise its full potential," says Rushworth.

"Perseus' buy-and-hold strategy and deep industry experience of the DMS market will allow us to continue to put our customers' needs first and provide an exceptional opportunity for our staff to flourish in a much larger organisation."

Sean Raynor, president of the Constellation Dealer Group, adds: "Auto-IT's addition to our portfolio will expand our global insight in industries we already serve and help us innovate in ways we haven't thought of."

Slight fall

Registrations of used-imported cars fell by 7.5 per cent last month – 8,943 compared to 9,664 in March 2023.

The Toyota Aqua was once again the most popular model, but its total dropped by 31.3 per cent to 1,008. Next up were the Prius on 772 and Mazda's Axela with 366.

Last month's top three marques were Toyota with 3,507 units, which was down by 10 per cent on March 2023, Mazda with 1,218 and Nissan on 1,184.

MILLIONS INVESTED

Turners Cars has officially opened its branch in Timaru, with the move expanding its network to 21 locations across the country.

The site in Meadows Road, Washdyke, was purchased by the company in 2022 and it started to trade from there in November before holding the official opening last month.

Greg Hedgepeth, chief executive officer, attended the event and says that after some analysis the company identified the south Canterbury town as an area with growth. It has invested $4m in developing the site, which was previously home to Leo Leonard Motors, and he says feedback has been "really good" since the business opened.

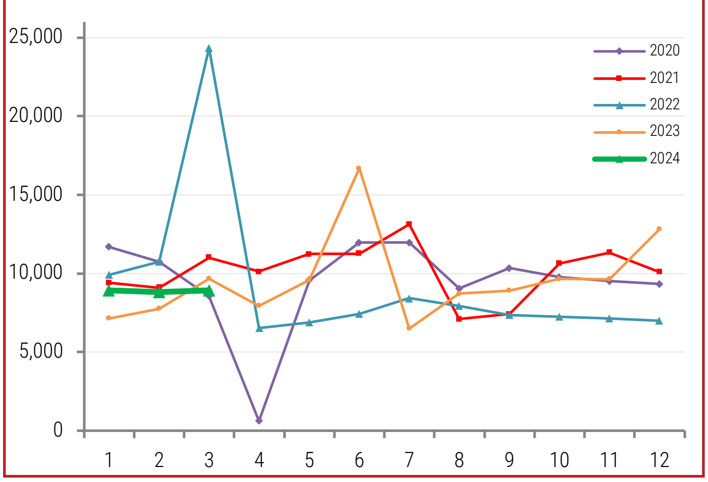
The company aims to maintain about 100 cars for sale on-site although would-be buyers visiting the branch can also browse through some 3,000 vehicles usually available on Turners' website.

"It's great to be open there," adds Hedgepeth. "A lot of hard work has gone into creating a branch we're proud of.

"We're confident it will open up mobility, business and employment opportunities for the good people of Timaru and the surrounding region.

"Feedback from the locals we've spoken to has been very positive. They are excited we are here."

Used Imported Passenger Registrations - 2020–2024



Used Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Motive Power - March 2024

MAKE	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/-%	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	104	421	-75.3%	1.2%	238	0.9%
Plug-in hybrid electric	129	220	-41.4%	1.4%	337	1.3%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	4,329	4,590	-5.7%	48.4%	12,309	46.2%
Petrol	4,279	4,282	-0.1%	47.8%	13,439	50.4%
Diesel	102	151	-32.5%	1.1%	346	1.3%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	**8,943**	**9,664**	**-7.5%**		**26,670**	

Supply-chain congestion eases

Port of Tauranga has reported a $47.2 million profit for the six months ending December 2023.

The company's earnings were impacted by lower overall trade volumes, especially in imported and transhipped containers, and higher operating costs.

Overall trade volumes dropped by 8.5 per cent compared with the first half of 2022/23 to 11.6 million tonnes. The number of 20-foot equivalent containers fell 15.8 per cent to 536,930.

Julia Hoare, the port's chairperson, says the first half of 2023/24 saw a return to more normal operating conditions following extreme supply-chain congestion since late 2020.

"Since March 2023, we have eliminated delays at the container terminal with the gradual return to shipping schedule adherence after a long period of unreliability.

"While we were impacted by delays caused by strike action in some Australian ports during the reporting period, service delivery continues to improve with productivity rates returning to pre-Covid levels.

"A more stable shipping schedule allows us to be much more efficient with a five per cent increase in container productivity against the previous period."

Operating revenue for the half-year was $200m for a 5.6 per cent drop. Operating expenses increased by two per cent to $106.3m.

The group's outlook for the second half of the 2024 financial year is expected to be "mixed".

Domestic economic conditions remain challenging, and international conflicts are causing shipping delays and increases in freight costs. However, the company expects schedule reliability to further improve.

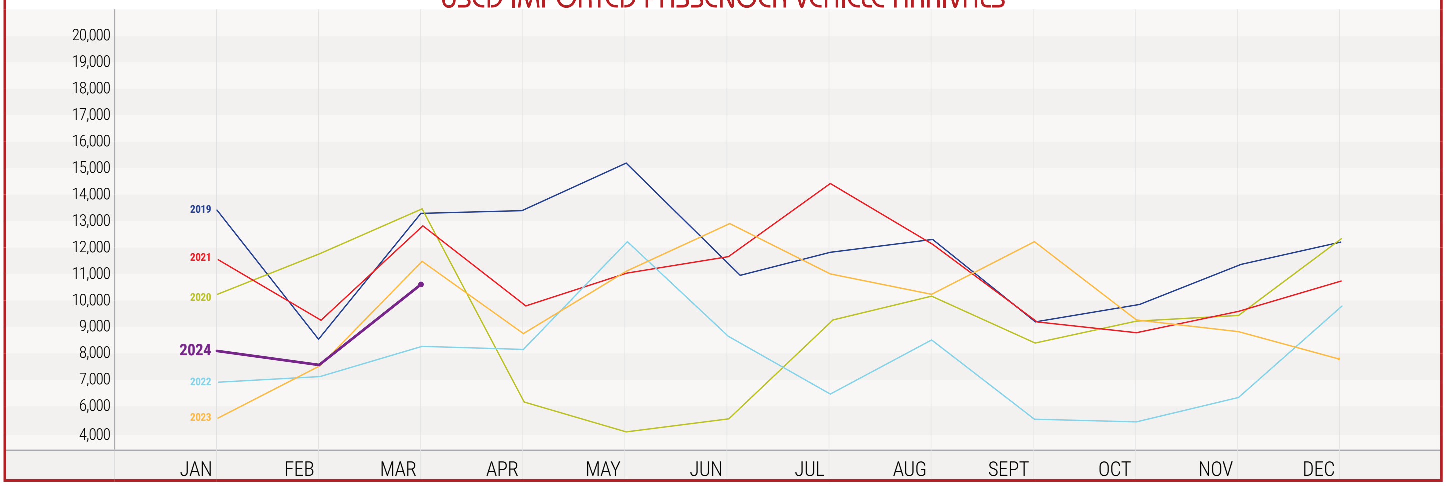
Based on its first-half year performance, the port's guidance remains unchanged and full-year earnings are expected to be between $95m and $107m compared to $117m in 2022/23.

BIG IMPORTS MONTH

Some 10,604 used cars came into New Zealand in March for the biggest monthly total so far in 2024 to take the year-to-date total to 26,216.

Japan accounted for 98.4 per cent of the overall total with 10,437. In addition, 105 units came in from Australia, 28 from Singapore, 14 from the UK and 11 were imported from the US.

USED IMPORTED PASSENGER VEHICLE ARRIVALS



Used Imported Passenger Vehicles By Country Of Export

COUNTRY OF EXPORT	2024 JAN '24	FEB '24	MAR '24	MAR MRKT SHARE %	2024 TOTAL	2023 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2023 TOTAL	MRKT SHARE	2022 2022 TOTAL	MRKT SHARE
Australia	74	109	105	1.0%	**288**	338	306	267	352	1,263	1.1%	2,353	2.6%
Great Britain	20	27	14	0.1%	**61**	75	60	58	79	272	0.2%	512	0.6%
Japan	7,985	7,281	10,437	98.4%	**25,703**	23,317	32,064	32,800	25,281	113,462	98.0%	87,740	95.6%
Singapore	18	43	28	0.3%	**89**	50	75	48	77	250	0.2%	423	0.5%
USA	12	21	11	0.1%	**44**	68	56	83	58	265	0.2%	487	0.5%
Other countries	12	10	9	0.1%	**31**	48	61	61	71	241	0.2%	250	0.3%
Total	**8,121**	**7,491**	**10,604**	**100.0%**	**26,216**	**23,896**	**32,622**	**33,317**	**25,918**	**115,753**	**100.0%**	**91,765**	**100.0%**

Hubs open in finance offices

AMI Insurance hubs are being introduced at select MTF Finance offices in Auckland and Christchurch.

The insurance provider now has a presence in the country's biggest city with its hub inside MTF Finance's store in Mount Eden, which opened ahead of a second one in Hornby.

"At the core of MTF Finance are our 53 locally owned and operated branches, and we're committed to expanding our network to help more communities," says Chris Lamers, MTF's chief executive officer.

"By partnering with AMI, we can help more New Zealanders with not just finance but also their insurance needs, giving customers convenient local access to trusted expertise and reliability."

Paula ter Brake, AMI Insurance's executive general manager of consumer brands, adds: "Through our partnership with MTF, we are excited to be able to connect on the ground with customers.

"This is the start of an ambitious plan to bring more AMI Insurance hubs to life through MTF locations across New Zealand."

Meanwhile, Assurant, which owns Protecta Insurance, has been named one of the world's most ethical operations.

The global operation, which has its headquarters in the US, was one of 136 companies spanning 20 countries and 44 industries recognised by Ethisphere, a leader in defining and advancing business practices.

Keith Demmings, president and chief executive officer of Assurant, says: "Our clients are some of the most valuable brands in the world. Operating ethically is foundational to protecting their brands as well as ours.

"Being named one of the world's most ethical companies is a testament to the thousands of Assurant employees who work according to our values."

Jay Rosenblum, chief legal officer, adds that operating ethically at scale requires clear policies, compelling training and robust procedures.

TRADING TAKES HIT

Dealers sold 14,665 second-hand cars to the public last month, which was a decrease of 11.1 per cent from 16,496 during the same month of 2023.

There were also 12,377 public-to-trader deals in March, which was down by 11.3 per cent from 13,953 over the same period, and 40,811 private transactions.

SECONDHAND CAR SALES - March 2024

	DEALER TO PUBLIC				PUBLIC TO PUBLIC			PUBLIC TO DEALER		
REGION	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/- %	MARKET SHARE	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/- %	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/- %
Northland	438	474	-7.6	2.99	1,799	1,974	-8.9	171	220	-22.3
Auckland	5,071	6,135	-17.3	34.58	14,028	16,117	-13.0	5,255	6,119	-14.1
Waikato	1,496	1,604	-6.7	10.20	3,867	4,323	-10.5	1,138	1,208	-5.8
Bay of Plenty	970	1,034	-6.2	6.61	2,812	3,220	-12.7	640	724	-11.6
Gisborne	170	161	5.6	1.16	390	409	-4.6	49	60	-18.3
Hawke's Bay	579	730	-20.7	3.95	1,462	1,666	-12.2	391	405	-3.5
Taranaki	362	349	3.7	2.47	1,040	1,104	-5.8	169	220	-23.2
Manawatu-Whanganui	818	810	1.0	5.58	2,027	2,212	-8.4	705	764	-7.7
Wellington	1,330	1,406	-5.4	9.07	3,144	3,419	-8.0	1,012	1,119	-9.6
Tasman	141	131	7.6	0.96	465	510	-8.8	21	21	0.0
Nelson	106	143	-25.9	0.72	432	466	-7.3	168	209	-19.6
Marlborough	117	154	-24.0	0.80	367	431	-14.8	67	73	-8.2
West Coast	96	100	-4.0	0.65	326	305	6.9	46	49	-6.1
Canterbury	2,035	2,070	-1.7	13.88	5,572	5,660	-1.6	1,940	2,094	-7.4
Otago	659	765	-13.9	4.49	2,005	2,248	-10.8	455	474	-4.0
Southland	222	367	-39.5	1.51	936	972	-3.7	150	194	-22.7
Other	55	63	-12.7	0.38	139	177	-21.5	0	0	0.0
NZ Total	**14,665**	**16,496**	**-11.1**	**100.00**	**40,811**	**45,213**	**-9.7**	**12,377**	**13,953**	**-11.3**

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - March 2024

MAKE	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/-%	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Toyota	1,584	1,577	0.4	20.9%	4,339	20.1%
Kia	968	1,253	-22.7	12.8%	2,217	10.3%
Mitsubishi	808	538	50.2	10.7%	2,530	11.7%
Suzuki	376	801	-53.1	5.0%	1,369	6.3%
Hyundai	319	1,218	-73.8	4.2%	819	3.8%
Honda	318	489	-35.0	4.2%	973	4.5%
MG	307	555	-44.7	4.1%	725	3.4%
GWM	283	25	1,032.0	3.7%	778	3.6%
Ford	276	275	0.4	3.7%	1,093	5.1%
Mazda	269	532	-49.4	3.6%	877	4.1%
Nissan	264	552	-52.2	3.5%	854	4.0%
Tesla	199	875	-77.3	2.6%	378	1.8%
BMW	194	183	6.0	2.6%	452	2.1%
Volkswagen	157	227	-30.8	2.1%	533	2.5%
Subaru	147	204	-27.9	1.9%	492	2.3%
Land Rover	145	173	-16.2	1.9%	362	1.7%
Mercedes-Benz	134	196	-31.6	1.8%	375	1.7%
Lexus	131	140	-6.4	1.7%	359	1.7%
Audi	121	114	6.1	1.6%	335	1.6%
Skoda	113	163	-30.7	1.5%	300	1.4%
Mini	89	48	85.4	1.2%	186	0.9%
BYD	49	615	-92.0	0.6%	125	0.6%
Peugeot	42	73	-42.5	0.6%	146	0.7%
Volvo	36	116	-69.0	0.5%	94	0.4%
Porsche	34	21	61.9	0.4%	176	0.8%
Jaguar	28	24	16.7	0.4%	63	0.3%
Cupra	25	32	-21.9	0.3%	94	0.4%
KGM	21	0	2,100.0	0.3%	21	0.1%
Mahindra	19	29	-34.5	0.3%	119	0.6%
Jeep	14	14	0.0	0.2%	46	0.2%
Haval	12	222	-94.6	0.2%	34	0.2%
SsangYong	9	40	-77.5	0.1%	61	0.3%
Aston Martin	8	4	100.0	0.1%	14	0.1%
Ineos	8	0	800.0	0.1%	24	0.1%
LDV	8	4	100.0	0.1%	24	0.1%
Opel	7	11	-36.4	0.1%	11	0.1%
Polestar	7	146	-95.2	0.1%	16	0.1%
Citroen	5	15	-66.7	0.1%	22	0.1%
Alfa Romeo	4	6	-33.3	0.1%	11	0.1%
Ferrari	4	2	100.0	0.1%	10	0.0%
Isuzu	3	22	-86.4	0.0%	31	0.1%
Omoda	3	0	300.0	0.0%	3	0.0%
Can-Am	2	4	-50.0	0.0%	10	0.0%
Fiat	2	9	-77.8	0.0%	10	0.0%
Others	9	56	-83.9	0.1%	74	0.3%
Total	**7,561**	**11,603**	**-34.8**	**100.0%**	**21,585**	**100.0%**

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - March 2024

MAKE	MODEL	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/-%	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Toyota	RAV4	791	545	45.1	10.5%	1,875	8.7%
Kia	Stonic	327	201	62.7	4.3%	591	2.7%
Kia	Seltos	325	182	78.6	4.3%	759	3.5%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	316	167	89.2	4.2%	963	4.5%
Mitsubishi	ASX	308	18	1,611.1	4.1%	921	4.3%
Suzuki	Swift	190	508	-62.6	2.5%	680	3.2%
MG	ZS	185	460	-59.8	2.4%	458	2.1%
Toyota	Corolla Cross	181	116	56.0	2.4%	554	2.6%
Kia	Sportage	165	230	-28.3	2.2%	429	2.0%
Toyota	Yaris Cross	147	163	-9.8	1.9%	323	1.5%
Mitsubishi	Eclipse Cross	146	255	-42.7	1.9%	495	2.3%
Toyota	Yaris	134	108	24.1	1.8%	184	0.9%
Tesla	Model 3	125	115	8.7	1.7%	134	0.6%
Hyundai	Kona	121	241	-49.8	1.6%	271	1.3%
Nissan	X-Trail	121	451	-73.2	1.6%	359	1.7%
Mazda	CX-5	120	301	-60.1	1.6%	394	1.8%
Toyota	Corolla	111	144	-22.9	1.5%	330	1.5%
Nissan	Qashqai	110	41	168.3	1.5%	404	1.9%
Ford	Everest	109	154	-29.2	1.4%	632	2.9%
Honda	Jazz	109	272	-59.9	1.4%	236	1.1%
Honda	ZR-V	102	2	5,000.0	1.3%	360	1.7%
GWM	Haval H6	98	0	9,800.0	1.3%	321	1.5%
GWM	Tank	92	0	9,200.0	1.2%	135	0.6%
Hyundai	Tucson	90	648	-86.1	1.2%	231	1.1%
GWM	Haval Jolion	88	0	8,800.0	1.2%	292	1.4%
Honda	CR-V	83	196	-57.7	1.1%	301	1.4%
Suzuki	Jimny	83	72	15.3	1.1%	261	1.2%
Ford	Puma	76	30	153.3	1.0%	172	0.8%
Tesla	Model Y	74	760	-90.3	1.0%	244	1.1%
Hyundai	Santa Fe	72	127	-43.3	1.0%	189	0.9%
Toyota	C-HR	71	195	-63.6	0.9%	132	0.6%
Kia	Niro	59	151	-60.9	0.8%	171	0.8%
Volkswagen	Tiguan	59	51	15.7	0.8%	207	1.0%
MG	MG3	56	48	16.7	0.7%	146	0.7%
Ford	Escape	55	21	161.9	0.7%	145	0.7%
Subaru	Crosstrek	54	0	5,400.0	0.7%	150	0.7%
BMW	X5	44	33	33.3	0.6%	100	0.5%
Mercedes-Benz	GLC	44	26	69.2	0.6%	73	0.3%
Mini	Countryman	44	14	214.3	0.6%	84	0.4%
Suzuki	Ignis	44	70	-37.1	0.6%	176	0.8%
Skoda	Superb	43	55	-21.8	0.6%	94	0.4%
MG	MG4	42	0	4,200.0	0.6%	66	0.3%
Toyota	Land Cruiser	39	32	21.9	0.5%	178	0.8%
BMW	X1	37	18	105.6	0.5%	70	0.3%
Land Rover	Range Rover Sport	37	72	-48.6	0.5%	69	0.3%
Others		1,834	4,310	-57.4	24.3%	6,226	28.8%
Total		**7,561**	**11,603**	**-34.8**	**100.0%**	**21,585**	**100.0%**

Future focus for brand's revamp

SsangYong NZ has announced it is joining its international counterparts by rebranding to KGM Motors.

The company says the change signifies a refresh of its vision, with a focus on the next generation of mobility solutions and incorporating technologies such as electrification, autonomous driving and artificial intelligence.

In New Zealand, the new name will sit alongside the marque's winged logo, which pays homage to KGM's heritage since its inception in 1954.

The renaming of SsangYong is an opportunity to rebrand and make an impact in the local market, says Daile Stephens, KGM New Zealand's head of brand marketing.

"We are thrilled to have the chance to start afresh with KGM and will be investing significantly in it," she adds. "We have a lot of faith in the KGM product, which comes with a solid engineering base and produces reliable vehicles.

"We're embracing the change with the start of a new journey to transform KGM into a brand for the future, and continue to grow as a proud and respected SUV and ute brand."

The official transition from SsangYong to KGM happened at the end of March with rebranding of its dealer network to take place over coming months.

Last month saw the arrival of the all-new Torres, the first model to be produced under KG Mobility ownership, with petrol and battery electric models available in the market.

The KGM Torres SUV

KGM Global, which specialises in four-by-fours, SUVs, multi-purpose vehicles and utes, was originally founded as Ha Dong-Hwan Automobile Manufacturing in January 1954 before changing its name to Dong-A Motors in 1977.

In 1988, it became SsangYong Motor Company, which was acquired by KGM Global with a majority shareholding in 2023. The acquisition signalled its entry into the automotive industry with a strategic focus on new product and electrification.

Inchcape, meanwhile, expanded its presence in New Zealand in August 2023 by acquiring SsangYong distribution and retail network with five owned dealerships across Auckland, Taupo, Wellington and Christchurch.

BOOST FOR CHARGING

BMW NZ has increased its number of public-charging locations for electric cars with its wallboxes becoming operational at The Heke, a restaurant and brewery on Waiheke Island.

The site is the latest to feature the marque's 22kW chargers, following installations at golf clubs, luxury resorts and hotels across the country.

Third-generation BMW Wallbox chargers are also operational at Manawatu Golf Club, Manse Luxury Lodge in the Hawke's Bay, Hastings Golf Club and Millbrook Resort, Queenstown.

BMW NZ, which offers 10 battery electric vehicles, partnered with ChargeNet seven years ago to create a network of DC fast-charging stations.

In 2022, it teamed up with EV charge point operator Jolt to assist in the rollout of free, fast-charging options nationwide.

SOUTH ISLAND PRESENCE

Omoda Jaecoo now has 13 dealerships after opening at Southern Motor Group in Dunedin.

Its vehicles are hitting the market this month with the launch of the Omoda C5 and E5, and there are plans to release eight models here over the next two years.

Sheldon Humphries, country manager, says building a stronger presence in the South Island is a key part of its business expansion plan. The company's only other Mainland site at present is Blackwells Omoda, Christchurch.

FLEET EXPANSION

New Zealand's rental fleet has been boosted by an in-terminal branch of Go Rentals at Auckland Airport.

More than $20 million is being invested in 500 new vehicles for Alamo, Enterprise Rent-a-Car and National Car Rental.

About 50 per cent of around 55,000 units in our rental market entered the second-hand sector during the coronavirus pandemic with disruptions in the supply chain then impacting on expanding the fleet's size.

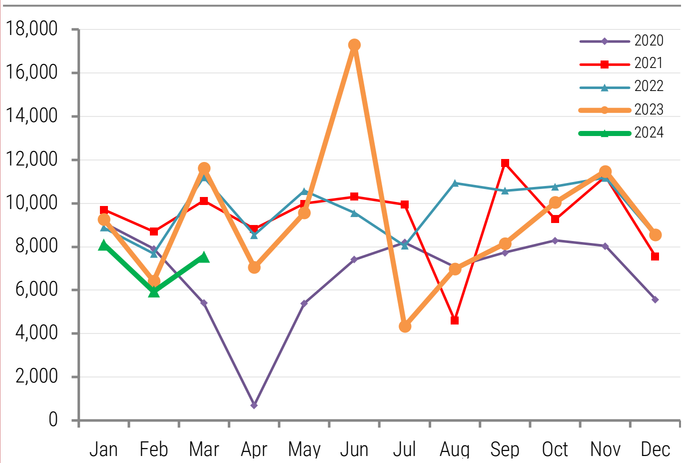
Sales slump

New-car registrations dropped by 34.8 per cent in March when compared to the same month in 2023 – from 11,603 to 7,561.

The month's top model was Toyota's RAV4 with 791 units, which recorded a year-on-year jump of 45.1 per cent from 545. Two Kia models were next up – the Stonic with 327 and Seltos on 325.

March's most popular marques were Toyota on 1,584 registrations, Kia with 968 Mitsubishi on 808.

New Passenger Registrations - 2020–2024



New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Motive Power - March 2024

MAKE	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/- %	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	477	2,627	-81.8%	6.3%	1,082	5.0%
Plug-in hybrid electric	225	515	-56.3%	3.0%	590	2.7%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	2,628	2,563	2.5%	34.8%	6,943	32.2%
Petrol	3,662	5,016	-27.0%	48.4%	10,880	50.4%
Diesel	569	881	-35.4%	7.5%	2,090	9.7%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	1	-100.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	**7,561**	**11,603**	**-34.8%**		**21,585**	

Clean-car laws impact profits

Colonial Motor Company has announced a trading profit after tax of $9.1 million for the six months to the end of December.

The result was down by 35.9 per cent from $14.2m during the same period of the prior year.

Ash Waugh, chairman, says the figures for the first half of 2023/24 come after the comparative previous period's "very strong result".

As reported in the company's guidance update in January, the prior government's clean-car legislation has had significant distorting impacts on the new-vehicle market.

"The current government's telegraphed and welcome decision to cease the clean car discount led to inevitable negative market impacts in November and December 2023," says Waugh.

"It logically suppressed immediate-term demand for non-electric vehicles, pushing registration and sales into January 2024.

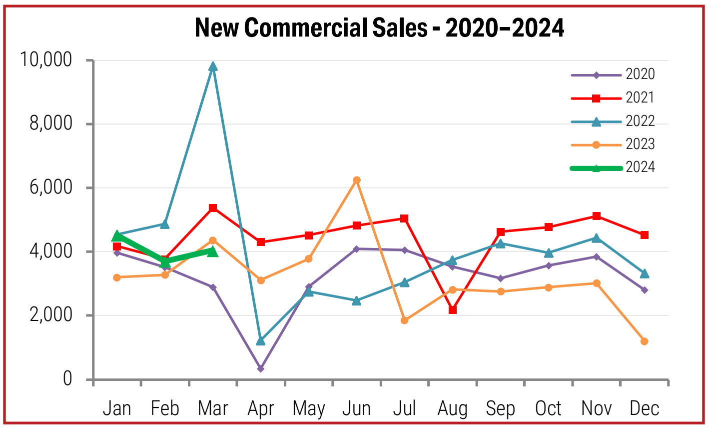
"A high interest-rate environment and associated inventory holding costs also influenced the half-year results."

Waugh notes there were 140,850 new light-vehicle registrations during the 2023 calendar year, down by more than 15 per cent from 2022, with the latter months of the year being "heavily impacted by issues already mentioned".

Conversely, the heavy-truck market was up seven per cent on the prior year.

In addition to challenging trading conditions, the company also incurred start-up costs to launch its new venture into JAC light trucks.

It explains that establishing a new brand in New Zealand



New Commercial Sales by Make - March 2024

MAKE	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/-%	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Ford	1,133	1,438	-21.2	28.0%	3,829	31.2%
Toyota	806	1,071	-24.7	19.9%	2,655	21.6%
Mitsubishi	681	304	124.0	16.8%	1,445	11.8%
Nissan	292	196	49.0	7.2%	689	5.6%
Isuzu	189	299	-36.8	4.7%	743	6.1%
Fuso	134	128	4.7	3.3%	276	2.2%
Volkswagen	120	52	130.8	3.0%	388	3.2%
Mercedes-Benz	93	77	20.8	2.3%	226	1.8%
Hyundai	78	38	105.3	1.9%	181	1.5%
Scania	57	58	-1.7	1.4%	174	1.4%
Hino	46	87	-47.1	1.1%	131	1.1%
Fiat	34	12	183.3	0.8%	199	1.6%
Mahindra	34	4	750.0	0.8%	38	0.3%
LDV	31	177	-82.5	0.8%	157	1.3%
DAF	30	25	20.0	0.7%	96	0.8%
Iveco	30	47	-36.2	0.7%	128	1.0%
UD Trucks	28	39	-28.2	0.7%	73	0.6%
Volvo	26	29	-10.3	0.6%	101	0.8%
GWM	22	0	2,200.0	0.5%	22	0.2%
Kenworth	20	13	53.8	0.5%	84	0.7%
Others	159	270	-41.1	3.9%	639	5.2%
Total	**4,043**	**4,364**	**-7.4**	**100.0%**	**12,274**	**100.0%**

New Commercial Sales by Model - March 2024

MAKE	MODEL	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/-%	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Ford	Ranger	1,006	1,332	-24.5	24.9%	3,432	28.0%
Mitsubishi	Triton	681	302	125.5	16.8%	1,445	11.8%
Toyota	Hilux	611	833	-26.7	15.1%	1,960	16.0%
Nissan	Navara	292	196	49.0	7.2%	689	5.6%
Ford	Transit	127	99	28.3	3.1%	397	3.2%
Toyota	Hiace	107	207	-48.3	2.6%	522	4.3%
Toyota	Land Cruiser	86	31	177.4	2.1%	171	1.4%
Isuzu	D-Max	81	143	-43.4	2.0%	432	3.5%
Volkswagen	Amarok	75	5	1,400.0	1.9%	286	2.3%
Hyundai	Staria Load	74	28	164.3	1.8%	163	1.3%
Mercedes-Benz	Sprinter	62	46	34.8	1.5%	157	1.3%
Isuzu	N Series	55	72	-23.6	1.4%	147	1.2%
Isuzu	F Series	46	56	-17.9	1.1%	125	1.0%
Fiat	Ducato	34	12	183.3	0.8%	199	1.6%
Mahindra	Pik-Up	34	4	750.0	0.8%	38	0.3%
DAF	CF	26	25	4.0	0.6%	89	0.7%
Fuso	Canter 616	22	13	69.2	0.5%	32	0.3%
GWM	Cannon	22	0	2,200.0	0.5%	22	0.2%
Iveco	Daily	22	36	-38.9	0.5%	101	0.8%
Volkswagen	Crafter	21	24	-12.5	0.5%	49	0.4%
Others		559	900	-37.9	13.8%	1,818	14.8%
Total		**4,043**	**4,364**	**-7.4**	**100.0%**	**12,274**	**100.0%**

will take time to mature and this investment isn't expected to make a positive contribution in 2024.

Colonial reports the rebuild of Agricentre's tractor dealership in Gore has been completed and a property has been acquired in Nelson this year.

This provides provides a foothold and opens options for the future in that key market.

Waugh says: "In this somewhat volatile property market environment, we have adopted a more conservative programme for dealership development and refurbishment."

Looking ahead, he notes that although the company's trading conditions stabilised in January it remains cautious about the rest of the financial year.

"The same fundamental issues of economic uncertainty, a relatively low New Zealand dollar, cost-of-living factors and stubbornly high interest rates, along with geo-political tensions, will continue to influence confidence," he adds.

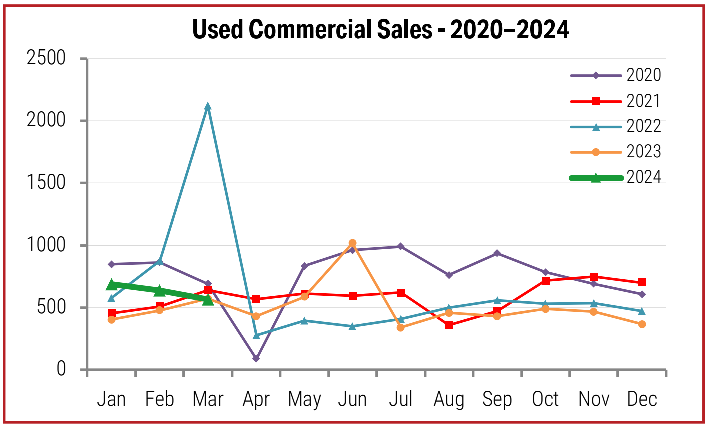
"These will impact to an unknown degree on new and used-vehicle enquiry in the second half of the financial year.

TAKEOVER COMPLETED

Tourism Holdings Ltd (THL) has acquired Adelaide-based Camperagent RV Centre in Australia for about $12.87m.

The deal by the New Zealand-based company plays a role in its broader strategy to strengthen its foothold in the global RV sector.

Grant Webster, THL's managing director, says the acquisition is more than an expansion.



MAJOR MARKET SHIFTS

March was topsy-turvy when comparing sales of New Zealand's most popular utes to the same month of last year.

The Ford Ranger came first on the ladder with 1,006 registrations, but that was a 24.5 per cent drop from 1,332 in March 2023.

On the flipside, Mitsubishi's Triton notched up a 125.5 per cent jump from 302 to 681 to claim second. Toyota's Hilux had to settle for third on the back of a 26.7 year-on-year decline to 611 from 833.

Overall, there were 4,043 new commercials registered last month, which was down by 7.4 per cent from 4,364. Used imports came in at 566, which was down by 0.9 per cent from 571.

Used Commercial Sales by Make - March 2024

MAKE	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/-%	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Toyota	292	245	19.2	51.6%	951	49.9%
Nissan	116	123	-5.7	20.5%	423	22.2%
Hino	36	53	-32.1	6.4%	101	5.3%
Isuzu	32	22	45.5	5.7%	91	4.8%
Mitsubishi	20	34	-41.2	3.5%	76	4.0%
Ford	16	18	-11.1	2.8%	98	5.1%
Mazda	10	7	42.9	1.8%	27	1.4%
Dodge	5	1	400.0	0.9%	10	0.5%
Holden	4	7	-42.9	0.7%	8	0.4%
UD Trucks	4	7	-42.9	0.7%	5	0.3%
Volkswagen	4	5	-20.0	0.7%	16	0.8%
Chevrolet	3	8	-62.5	0.5%	12	0.6%
Daihatsu	3	10	-70.0	0.5%	14	0.7%
Fiat	3	1	200.0	0.5%	13	0.7%
Suzuki	3	5	-40.0	0.5%	14	0.7%
Factory Built	2	1	100.0	0.4%	2	0.1%
Hyundai	2	2	0.0	0.4%	3	0.2%
RAM	2	1	100.0	0.4%	4	0.2%
Fuso	1	1	0.0	0.2%	5	0.3%
GMC	1	0	100.0	0.2%	2	0.1%
Others	7	20	-65.0	1.2%	31	1.6%
Total	**566**	**571**	**-0.9**	**100.0%**	**1,906**	**100.0%**

Used Commercial Sales by Model - March 2024

MAKE	MODEL	MAR'24	MAR'23	+/-%	MAR'24 MKT SHARE	2024 YEAR TO DATE	2024 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Hiace	226	162	39.5	39.9%	727	38.1%
Nissan	NV350	72	73	-1.4	12.7%	268	14.1%
Toyota	Regius	34	36	-5.6	6.0%	112	5.9%
Hino	Dutro	28	39	-28.2	4.9%	75	3.9%
Isuzu	Elf	20	13	53.8	3.5%	64	3.4%
Nissan	Caravan	20	20	0.0	3.5%	71	3.7%
Toyota	Dyna	16	28	-42.9	2.8%	58	3.0%
Fuso	Canter	12	28	-57.1	2.1%	54	2.8%
Nissan	NV200	12	6	100.0	2.1%	38	2.0%
Toyota	Toyoace	11	7	57.1	1.9%	25	1.3%
Isuzu	Forward	8	8	0.0	1.4%	17	0.9%
Ford	Ranger	7	10	-30.0	1.2%	24	1.3%
Nissan	Atlas	6	9	-33.3	1.1%	20	1.0%
Dodge	Ram	5	1	400.0	0.9%	9	0.5%
Ford	Transit	4	1	300.0	0.7%	55	2.9%
Hino	Melpha	4	0	400.0	0.7%	4	0.2%
Mazda	Titan	4	2	100.0	0.7%	9	0.5%
Mitsubishi	Fuso	4	1	300.0	0.7%	6	0.3%
Volkswagen	Transporter	4	2	100.0	0.7%	5	0.3%
Daihatsu	Hijet	3	10	-70.0	0.5%	14	0.7%
Others		66	115	-42.6	11.7%	251	13.2%
Total		**566**	**571**	**-0.9**	**100.0%**	**1,906**	**100.0%**

Charging sites' owner changes

Daily sales drop

New-car imports in March came in at 8,978. This was up by 19.6 per cent from 7,506 in the same month a year earlier and 16 per cent ahead of February's total of 7,739 units.

Registrations of 7,561 new passenger vehicles were completed last month, which was down 34.8 per cent from March 2023. However, it represented a 27.6 per cent increase from 5,926 in February.

The numbers have resulted in the stock of new cars still to be registered increasing by 1,417 to 71,825. Daily sales, as averaged over the previous 12 months, stand at 287 units per day – down from 317 a year earlier.

March's results mean stock at-hand has increased to 250 days, or 8.2 months, if sales continue at the current rate. In the same month of 2023, it was 243 days.

Eight of Vector's public-charging sites for electric vehicles (EVs) in Auckland have been bought by ChargeNet.

The facilities will now be integrated into ChargeNet's network with extra locations expected to follow soon.

Vector started trialling the provision of public charging in 2015, the same year ChargeNet started building New Zealand's first national charging network.

"It's a unique opportunity to integrate Vector's successful programme into our established network," says Danusia Wypych, ChargeNet's chief executive officer.

The sale has resulted in ChargeNet taking over the operation and ownership of the Vector sites, which include fast and AC chargers.

They have now been integrated into the former's network and moved to a paid-usage model. Users need to have a ChargeNet account to use the sites.

Wypych adds: "We believe many Vector charging users will already be our customers.

"EV drivers are savvy when it comes to getting the most out of charging, so some will also have ChargeNet accounts linked to their electricity provider through our partnerships with Genesis, Electric Kiwi and Octopus Energy."

Wypych says ChargeNet's bid for Vector's charging network was successful because it included a commitment to work with the latter to provide it with details of the energy consumption of EVs and customer charging trends in Auckland.

ChargeNet is also hoping to work with landlords on investment and improvement plans for charging sites.

Vector's chief executive, Simon Mackenzie, says: "We started deploying EV chargers as a trial around Auckland in 2015 with the support of our majority owner Entrust, and we appreciate its forward thinking and commitment to customer solutions.

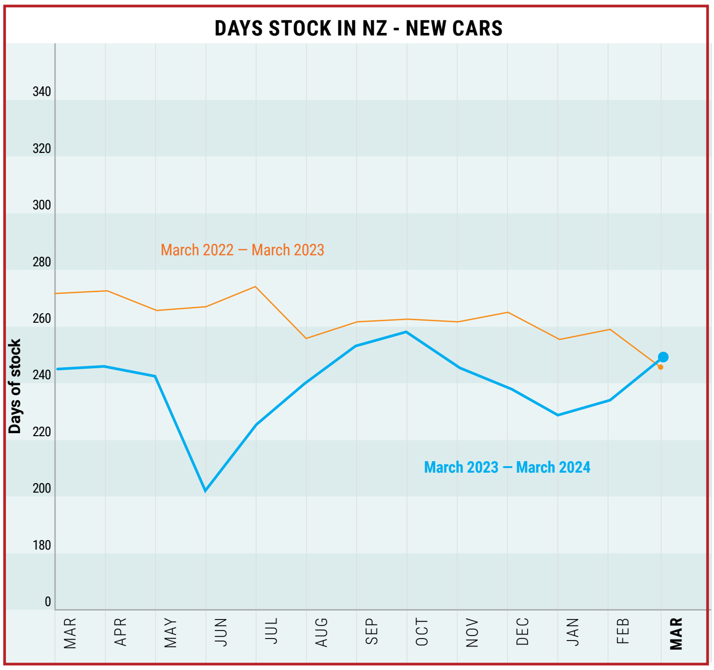
"We're pleased to establish a relationship with ChargeNet to continue developing our understanding of the energy needs of EVs and customer charging behaviour in Auckland, and how to meet them in the most affordable way.

"The sale is in line with Vector's strategy to enable the lowest-cost electrification of transport.

"We maintain the ability to monitor and respond to periods of high and low electricity demand on ►

Dealer stock of new cars in New Zealand

	CAR SALES IMPORTED	CAR SALES REGISTERED	VARIANCE	STOCK	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE	DAYS STOCK AT HAND
Mar '23	7,506	11,605	-4,099	77,096	317	243
Apr '23	6,045	7,029	-984	76,112	313	243
May '23	7,995	9,541	-1,546	74,566	310	241
Jun '23	10,725	17,239	-6,514	68,052	331	206
Jul '23	8,183	4,332	3,851	71,903	321	224
Aug '23	9,399	6,972	2,427	74,330	310	240
Sep '23	10,030	8,126	1,904	76,234	303	251
Oct '23	10,751	10,032	719	76,953	301	255
Nov '23	7,825	11,476	-3,651	73,302	302	243
Dec '23	7,435	8,548	-1,113	72,189	302	239
Jan '24	4,504	8,098	-3,594	68,595	299	229
Feb '24	7,739	5,926	1,813	70,408	298	236
Mar '24	**8,978**	**7,561**	**1,417**	**71,825**	**287**	**250**
Year to date	**21,221**	**21,585**				
Change on last month	**16.0%**	**27.6%**		**2.0%**		
Change on Mar 2023	**19.6%** MORE IMPORTED	**-34.8%** LESS SOLD		**-6.8%** LESS STOCK		



our network to smooth out overall demand. This is similar to how electric-bus charging is enabled by Vector in Auckland."

ANXIETY OVER RANGE

About two-thirds of drivers who don't have EVs say they will not be making the switch any time soon.

That's according to a survey conducted in the UK, which shows a substantial number of customers saying they will not consider an electric car as their next purchase.

While EVs are heavily promoted as being greener and cheaper to run, the research suggests such incentives are not enough for motorists there to make the switch. Main concerns continue to be sticker prices, single-charge mileage and charging-point availability.

Sixty-one per cent of respondents were concerned about range and spending more time recharging their electric car than driving it.

Out of those who already own an EV, 66.7 per cent said they were happy with it and owning fossil-fuelled models no longer made any sense.

The survey by Refused Car Finance was conducted to get an idea of how drivers feel about buying electric cars.

While the UK's petrol and diesel car ban slated for 2035 is some way off, the company believes it's inevitable drivers will have to invest in an EV at some point in the future.

CARBON NEUTRALITY

Mazda Motor Corporation has unveiled a roadmap towards carbon neutrality at its plants and operational sites in Japan.

The company says these facilities account for about 75 per cent of its global carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

It wants to attain carbon neutrality at all its plants globally by 2035 and across the whole supply chain by 2050.

The medium-term goal is to reduce – by the 2030 financial year – its CO2 emissions by 69 per cent compared to 2013.

To achieve carbon neutrality at all its plants around the world, the company will focus on energy conservation, shifting to renewable energy and introducing carbon-neutral fuels. In terms of energy conservation, it will introduce internal carbon pricing as one of its capital-investment criteria.

As for introducing renewable energy, Mazda wants to switch the fuel used to supply the power-generation facilities at its plant in Hiroshima from fossil fuels to liquid ammonia.

To introduce carbon-neutral fuels, it will shift the fuel used to power vehicles for transport in the company from diesel to next-generation biofuel.

For factories outside of Japan, it will be investigating approaches for each region using its domestic carbon-neutral initiatives as a reference model.

Stock increases

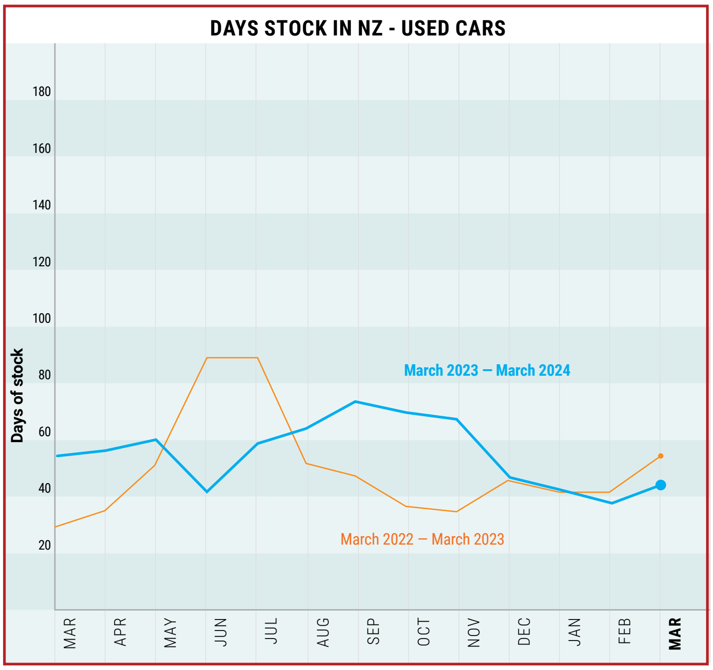
There were 10,604 used cars imported last month, up by 41.6 per cent from February when 7,491 units crossed our borders. However, the latest figure was down by 7.3 per cent from March 2023.

Some 8,943 units were registered last month. That was 1.4 per cent more than the 8,820 in February, but a fall of 7.5 per cent from 9,665 in the same month of last year.

With 1,661 more used cars imported than registered last month, unregistered stock on dealers' yards or in compliance shops came to 14,041 units.

This was up 13.4 per cent from 12,380 at the end of February as stock levels rose for the first time since September 2023. March's total was also a 4.8 per cent increase from 13,401 a year ago.

Average daily registrations for the month were 321 when compared to 247 a year ago and there's 44 days' stock remaining.



Dealer stock of used cars in New Zealand

	CAR SALES IMPORTED	CAR SALES REGISTERED	VARIANCE	STOCK	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE	DAYS STOCK AT HAND
Mar '23	11,442	9,665	1,777	13,401	247	54
Apr '23	8,768	7,931	837	14,238	251	57
May '23	10,954	9,577	1,377	15,615	258	60
Jun '23	12,900	16,668	-3,768	11,847	284	42
Jul '23	11,000	6,490	4,510	16,357	279	59
Aug '23	10,265	8,715	1,550	17,907	281	64
Sep '23	12,052	8,906	3,146	21,053	285	74
Oct '23	9,044	9,644	-600	20,453	292	70
Nov '23	8,711	9,636	-925	19,528	299	65
Dec '23	7,768	12,801	-5,033	14,495	315	46
Jan '24	8,121	8,907	-786	13,709	320	43
Feb '24	7,491	8,820	-1,329	12,380	323	38
Mar '24	**10,604**	**8,943**	**1,661**	**14,041**	**321**	**44**
Year to date	**26,216**	**26,670**				
Change on last month	**41.6%**	**1.4%**		**13.4%**		
Change on Mar 2023	**-7.3%** LESS IMPORTED	**-7.5%** LESS SOLD		**4.8%** MORE STOCK		