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Strong opposition to draft emissions rule

Association worries mandating testing regime will add compliance costs for little environmental gain

The government is being urged to reconsider plans to introduce in-service conformity (ISC) testing for light-vehicle imports from certain jurisdictions, with industry experts concerned it will result in unnecessary regulatory burdens.

The Motor Industry Association (MIA) has outlined its strong opposition to the move in a submission on the draft Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Exhaust Emissions Amendment (No 2) 2024.

Officials suggest inserting a new clause into the rule that states when an approved emissions standard requires ISC testing, the vehicle manufacturer is responsible for conducting such a test.

The draft issued by the NZTA adds this testing could be conducted offshore with overseas vehicles when those in our market "belong to the same ISC family or engine family being tested", and the model being tested is sold and driven on roads in other countries.

A draft rule change suggests imposing in-service conformity testing for some light-vehicle imports

Consultation on changing the rule closed late last month and the prospect of mandating ISC testing has drawn criticism from the MIA.

Aimee Wiley, chief executive officer, says the amendment would apply to new models from Europe and the US that meet standards such as UNR 83/08 and US Tier 3.

Those vehicles are expected to account for about seven per cent of New Zealand's overall light-vehicle market.

However, new imports meeting Australian Design Rules (ADRs) and those from Japan – expected to have a 43 per cent market share – will be exempt from ISC testing as will all used light vehicles.

Wiley adds introducing ISC testing to New Zealand is an unnecessary burden that "distorts market competitiveness, lacks enforcement feasibility and provides minimal environmental benefit".

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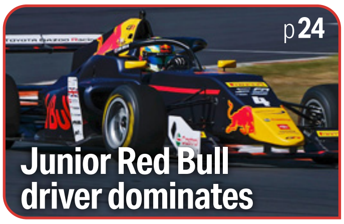

GUEST EDITORIAL

Transport sector needs sense of partnership

Greig Epps welcomes agency's new leader and calls for regulator to adopt balanced approach


GREIG EPPS
Chief executive officer, Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association

The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) congratulates Brett Gliddon on his appointment as chief executive of the NZTA.

His extensive background in infrastructure delivery and his proven ability to lead complex systems make him well-suited to guide the agency during a transformative time for our country's transport sector.

Last year presented significant challenges for VIA and its members. Changes in regulatory processes, shifting targets under the clean car standard and the continued pressure of balancing affordability with sustainability have tested the resilience of our industry.

Moreover, we have faced frustrations with the lack of timely engagement and consultation in decision-making processes, which has often resulted in unnecessary complexity and costs for businesses.

The NZTA is not only a regulator. It is a central player in a complex system where decisions affect businesses, consumers and communities.

While enforcement is essential for weeding out "bad actors", recent years have revealed an imbalance in approach.

Since the Kristy McDonald review, which was published in January 2019, highlighted concerns over a "cosy" relationship between the regulator and compliance industry, we have seen the pendulum swing too far the other way.

The starting assumption now seems to be that participants are looking to "game" the system. This mindset risks eroding trust between the NZTA and the wider industry it indirectly oversees.

Despite these hurdles, we remain optimistic about the potential for a more constructive relationship with the agency under Brett's leadership. At VIA, we hope he will bring a renewed focus on partnership and open dialogue.

A fair and balanced regulatory framework is essential – not just to maintain road safety and environmental standards, but to also ensure that businesses can operate efficiently and provide affordable, quality vehicles to Kiwi families.

We believe Brett has an opportunity to rebuild trust and reset the NZTA's relationship with stakeholders.

Proportionality, transparency and genuine engagement with the industry are key to overcoming the current frustrations and fostering a transport ecosystem that works for everyone.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the prospect of working with Brett to address these challenges and pursue shared goals.

By leveraging his expertise and embracing collaboration, we can make progress on critical issues, such as streamlining compliance processes, ensuring consistency in standards and supporting the transition to low-emissions vehicles.

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"Given its limited applicability, enforcement challenges and disproportionate impact on a small segment of the market, we urge the government to reconsider its inclusion," she says.

"Instead, we strongly urge the government to adopt a recall-based compliance model in alignment with Australia and Japan.

"This approach achieves emissions compliance goals while ensuring fair, practical and internationally harmonised regulation."

The MIA's submission notes it held prior discussions and informal consultation with NZTA and Ministry of Transport (MoT) officials during the drafting of the proposed amendment.

As a result, it acknowledges the document aims to ensure New Zealand benefits from overseas ISC emissions test data without requiring separate domestic testing.

Wiley explains the association's concerns do not lie with the policy intent, but with the drafting of the rule and its technical and practical applications.

IMPACT OF IN-SERVICE CONFORMITY TESTING FOR LIGHT-VEHICLE IMPORTS

SOURCE MARKET	VEHICLE TYPE	STANDARD FOR CERTIFICATION	EXPECTED NZ MARKET SHARE	MANDATED ISC REQUIREMENTS
All	New	ADR 79/05	43%	ISC exempt
Japan	New	Japan 2018 LH		
Europe	New	UNR 83/08	7%	ISC required
Europe	New	EU 715/2007 or EU 2017/1151		
USA	New	US Tier 3		
Japan	Used	Any of those approved*	49%	ISC exempt
Other	Used		1%	

Any of those approved* are Euro 5/6d, US Tier 2/3, Japan 2005 LH, Japan 2018, Japan 2018 LH, Japan 09, ADR 79/04 / 79/05, UNR83/08. Note: The MIA states EU 715/2007 and EU 2017/1151 are not included in the proposed vehicle exhaust-emission rule's definitions or in associated tables

Source: Motor Industry Association

"While policymakers have indicated that ISC testing would be limited to international test results rather than requiring local testing, the rule as drafted lacks a comprehensive supporting framework," she says.

"This is a critical concern for New Zealand's new-vehicle industry and its offshore OEM [original equipment manufacturer] homologation experts.

"It lacks a comprehensive regulatory framework to manage additional burdens related to recalls stemming from ISC requirements, further exacerbating enforcement complexities."

In making its case against including testing, the MIA highlights it has minimal applicability here because only an expected seven per cent of vehicles entering New Zealand's fleet each year would be subject to ISC requirements.

Many of the affected vehicles are certified under European standards not recognised in the amendment and would require unnecessary retesting.

Wiley says: "Retesting is expensive and unlikely to occur solely for New Zealand's benefit, making it more probable that fewer models will be available in the domestic market."

She warns the measure would create global inconsistency as major markets such as Australia and Japan exclude ISC testing, and New Zealand's inclusion in the regime may disproportionately impact certain brands.

This risks reducing consumer choice with European and US vehicles facing extra compliance costs as ADR and Japan-certified models avoid the same burden.

Other challenges posed by the proposals are given as no clear mechanism existing for managing ISC failures and such testing only being conducted for up to five years after production, therefore covering a fraction of a vehicle's life in New Zealand.

There would also be enforcement inconsistencies as ISC requirements do not apply to used imports, which account for 50 per cent of the domestic fleet.

"Developing an ISC testing framework in New Zealand would be prohibitively expensive for regulators and industry alike," says Wiley in the MIA's submission.

In addition, the emissions reduction will be negligible as testing would apply only to a small subset of already high-compliance vehicles.

The submission goes on to recommend officials consider adopting an alternative recall-based compliance model as implemented in Australia and Japan.

Wiley explains this offers a more effective and globally harmonised alternative to ISC testing, and can ensure emissions compliance while avoiding regulatory complexity and unnecessary burdens on industry.

"New Zealand already monitors global recalls and mandates local implementation for affected models. Expanding this framework to cover emissions-related recalls would be more effective than ISC testing."

The submission notes the MIA-administered recall system currently serves only new-vehicle importers who are association members, and suggests refinements are needed to extend its scope and effectiveness.

"Used-vehicle importers and non-MIA members are not active participants in the recall system, creating enforcement gaps.

"A robust recall framework should include near-new used vehicles, such as parallel imports and grey imports less than five years old, to prevent regulatory loopholes.

"The NZTA and Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment already oversee international recall actions and mandate corrective measures for local distributors.

"Refining this process to ensure fair application across all importers, including used-vehicle importers and non-MIA members, will enhance compliance without excessive regulation."

Wiley points out Australia and

Japan have successfully adopted a recall-based model that prioritises emissions system durability and recall enforcement over ISC testing.

"Australia, in exempting ISC from ADR 79/05, is planning on managing emissions compliance through the Australian Road Vehicle Standards Legislation. It would be preferable to align our approach with key trading partners."

'HARMONISED MARKET'

While the MIA opposes ISC testing, it supports the draft amendment aligning New Zealand regulations with the transition timelines for Euro 6d and its accepted alternatives across the Tasman.

It also backs incorporating the new ADRs as alternative and equivalent standards for entry certification in New Zealand.

The NZTA is proposing bringing forward the date for new-model light vehicles to comply with Euro 6d and its equivalents to December 1, 2025, instead of the previous setting of July 1, 2027.

"This alignment reflects the MIA's long-standing advocacy for regulatory consistency between New Zealand and Australia, fostering a harmonised market that benefits industry, consumers and the broader economy," says Wiley.

New Zealand currently allows cars meeting European, Japanese, US and Australian exhaust-emissions standards – or global UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) rules – to cross our borders.

Australia tightened its emissions standards for light vehicles last April and its new ADRs are based on UNECE regulations.

Compared with the current ADR 79/04, which aligns with Euro 5, the new ADR 79/05 standard includes a 55 per cent cut in emissions limits for nitrogen oxide from diesels and limiting particle numbers to control fine-particle emissions from petrol models with direct-injection systems.

It also includes tougher rules for on-board diagnostics monitoring emissions and improved emissions tests to ensure reductions are realised during normal driving.

The MIA's submission notes

Retesting is expensive and unlikely to occur solely for New Zealand's benefit

– Aimee Wiley

making sure international emissions standards and their equivalency within the land transport rule are treated consistently is essential for regulatory clarity and effectiveness.

Wiley notes EU 2017/1151 and US Tier 3 are NZTA-approved emissions regulations that include ISC requirements, but those standards are missing from tables featured in the document put out for consultation.

"Since these regulations are recognised in the draft amendment's ISC definitions, clarification is needed to maintain consistency between emissions standards and ISC requirements."

The MIA has asked for these technical discrepancies in the rule to be reviewed and amended by the government.

ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS

The used-imports sector is calling on the government to create a system with emissions standards from different jurisdictions being treated as "alternative but equal".

The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) says identifying acceptable standards from key markets will allow New Zealand to achieve its emissions and safety goals without undue complexity for importers and officials.

As part of its submission on proposed changes to the rule, it also calls for "fair and equitable treatment" of Japanese standards that cover approximately half of our fleet.

VIA supports the inclusion of the ADRs, including 79/05 – Emission Control for Light Vehicles, as qualifying standards for imports.

Given New Zealand's close integration with Australia's new-vehicle market, it believes the move will make life easier for importers and reduce costs for consumers.

However, it goes on to recommend the government explicitly treat vehicle standards from other countries, such as Japan, as alternative qualifying standards without implying direct equivalency.

VIA also wants officials to adopt a methodology for comparison between different standards.

Greig Epps, VIA's chief executive officer, notes this country has a small market and because of its limited leverage is unable to develop its own standards and requirements that can influence global vehicle manufacturing.

"Instead, New Zealand must look to other jurisdictions for guidance or adopt standards already established by larger markets," he says in the association's submission. "This reliance on international standards has, at times, led to challenges.

"One has been the ongoing effort to establish equivalency between the standards of different jurisdictions. This pursuit of equivalency has proven to be resource-intensive, creating uncertainty and complexity without clear resolutions.

"VIA believes it's time to shift the focus. Rather than striving for a perfect equivalency between

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The date for new-model light vehicles to comply with Euro 6d and its equivalents is set to change

[continued from page 5]

international standards, New Zealand should determine its desired level of progress and adopt relevant and alternate standards from key jurisdictions that align with its goals."

Most vehicles imported into New Zealand originate from Japan, with the countries sharing similar driving conditions, and the domestic market also has close connections with European standards and ADRs.

Recognising these links, VIA proposes an approach whereby standards are treated as alternative but equal, "rather than attempting to compare or rank them".

VIA's top recommendation is for the recognition of ADR 79/05, Euro 6d, Japan 2005's Cxx and Dxx ratings, and Japan 2018 as qualifying standards without implying direct equivalency.

It says this should be the case at least until its second recommendation – to adopt a methodology for standard comparison – is completed.

Kit Wilkerson, VIA's head of policy and strategy, says officials should work with industry stakeholders to develop an official comparison methodology for evaluating emissions standards.

He adds the association has produced a peer-reviewed, harm-based comparison methodology, which it has previously submitted to the NZTA, and this "offers a robust framework for this purpose".

A third recommendation is to ensure equitable treatment of Japanese standards by recognising their importance in supplying affordable, used low-emissions vehicles to Kiwis, "particularly given their superior emissions performance in real-world conditions compared to legacy standards like Euro 5 or ADR 79/04".

TAKING 'POSITIVE STEP'

In supporting the inclusion of new ADRs in legislation, VIA explains New Zealand relies on two main supply channels. These are vehicles made to Australian specifications and used imports from Japan.

Wilkerson says recognising ADR 79/05 as an alternative standard is a positive step but standards such as Japan 2018 and Japan 2005, with Dxx and Cxx nomenclature, are just as vital to maintaining affordability and diversity in the fleet.

VIA also backs aligning compliance dates for Euro 6d and accepted alternatives with Australia, which means new light vehicles will have to meet those standards by December 1, 2025.

Wilkerson adds this change provides consistency for importers and ensures vehicles designed for the larger market across the Tasman can also serve New Zealand without extra compliance costs.

However, he urges officials to address the disparity between new vehicles imported from Australia and used imports from Japan.

"Used Japanese vehicles meeting Japan 05 or Japan 2018 often provide similar or superior emissions performance compared to vehicles certified to ADRs.

"Japan's regulations have generally focused more on nitrogen oxide [NOx] due to their impact on smog, acid rain and respiratory health.

"As a result, Japan 2005 sets stricter NOx limits. These goals address concerns raised in New Zealand reporting such as Our Air 2024. Produced by the Ministry for the Environment, it notes 39 per cent of NOx emissions were from road vehicles in 2019."

Wilkerson adds that VIA's harm-based methodology shows cars achieving Cxx or Dxx ratings, that is a 50 per cent or 75 per cent improvement on Japan 05, cap harm from emissions better or comparably to Euro 5 and Euro 6 respectively.

To avoid unintended market imbalances, VIA recommends any legislation should recognise Cxx as an alternate qualifying standard alongside ADR 79/04 and Euro 5, and Dxx to be accepted along with ADR 79/05, Japan 2018 and Euro 6.

The association notes aligning compliance dates with Australia benefits the new-vehicle market, but the implications of this for the used sector need extra attention.

Under the proposed timeline, used imports will need to meet standards aligned with Euro 6d and ADR 79/05 by mid-2028, which VIA fears will create challenges for the parallel import sector.

The average New Zealand used import is about 10 years old, with more than 80 per cent being newer than 12 years old. This means those imported in 2028 would have to meet standards equivalent to Euro 6d from 2016-18.

"New vehicles in New Zealand are not required to meet Euro 6d or ADR 79/05 until 2026, leaving a significant gap in expectations," says Wilkerson.

"Used importers are effectively being asked to source vehicles compliant with stricter standards up to a decade earlier than new."

He adds the current timeline being proposed by the government risks reducing used-vehicle options and increasing prices for consumers.

"A constrained supply of compliant used vehicles will disproportionately affect private buyers, who make up the majority of the market for Japanese imports."

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VIA is lobbying the government to ensure any harmonisation of standards accounts for these factors and warns failing to address this disparity risks pricing many Kiwis out of the imported-vehicle market, new and used.

Wilkerson suggests a lack of action in this area would also undermine fleet-renewal goals and equitable access to cleaner vehicles. "We don't seek to block change, but we must ensure change is manageable for the average car buyer."

Besides looking at standards from other jurisdictions, VIA wants the government to provide clear guidance on future updates with sufficient consultation to address the needs of New Zealand's dual-channel supply system.

It also suggests a mid-implementation review of the 2028 timeline for used vehicles to assess its impact on affordability, availability and fleet turnover.

"This will ensure the transition doesn't unfairly burden consumers or disrupt the supply chain," adds Wilkerson.

Overall, VIA appreciates the government's efforts to modernise vehicle emissions standards and align with international best practices, with the inclusion of ADR 79/05 and the alignment of compliance dates with Australia positive steps.

"However, ensuring equitable treatment of Japanese standards and developing a robust comparison methodology will be critical to maintaining a balanced and accessible market for all."

> **We don't seek to block change, but we must ensure change is manageable for the average car buyer**
> – Kit Wilkerson, VIA

'ROBUST' REGULATIONS

The proposed changes from the government follow 2023's amendments to the Land Transport Rule when the new ADRs for heavy vehicles were added along with Euro 6d standards for light vehicles.

Darren Baars, the NZTA's infrastructure and stewardship system policy manager, says: "We share our new-vehicle market with Australia so sharing the same standards makes sense. The new ADRs are robust and will help realise benefits like reducing harmful nitrogen-oxide emissions from diesel vehicles."

As for completing the alignment of New Zealand's compliance dates with Australia, the transport agency notes this change would impact new-model light vehicles entering Aotearoa that haven't been sold here before.

It's also looking to make minor text changes to the legislation to clarify some definitions and clauses in the rule to ensure they are easy to understand, and to resolve technical issues in the law identified by the NZTA and industry.

Officials will now analyse submissions. A final rule amendment is expected in a few months' time.

Changing portfolios

Chris Bishop has taken over as Minister of Transport from Simeon Brown following last month's cabinet reshuffle.

Bishop, National's member for Hutt South, previously held the portfolio when in opposition.

"Simeon is an outstanding minister who has done an excellent job delivering on the government's priorities," says Prime Minister Christopher Luxon.

"Off the back of that performance, I've decided his skills are best placed to take leadership of our health system.

"Chris Bishop becomes Minister of Transport, taking responsibility for an additional part of the government's ambitious infrastructure agenda."

Nicola Willis, Minister of Finance, has added economic growth to her workload.


Chris Bishop

Other cabinet members of note for the car industry include Simon Watts with energy and climate change, and Erica Stanford, who has immigration and education.

Sitting outside of cabinet are Andrew Bayly with commerce and consumer affairs and ACC, Chris Penk, who has small business and manufacturing, and Penny Simmonds with environment and vocational education. James Meager is Associate Minister of Transport.

Todd McDonald, centre left, and Ross Sheppard, shaking hands at the award presentation surrounded by employees

Franchise scoops global awards

Staff at a dealership are celebrating it being recognised as a "global best" by a marque and receiving its prestigious "platinum prestige" award.

Pukekohe Kia is one of 350 to attain the double achievement out of the brand's 7,000 franchises worldwide and is first in New Zealand to do so since 2019.

"While we're a small operation in the grand scheme of things, we epitomise a family-focused business, one with a strong connection to the community and surrounding rural area," says Ross Sheppard, managing director.

"We strive to do the best for people as they experience all touchpoints of our business from the new-car buying stage to after-sales and servicing needs."

Todd McDonald, managing director of Kia NZ, adds: "The platinum prestige dealer award is reserved for the best of the best.

"We couldn't be prouder of the team at Pukekohe Kia, specifically its commitment to excellence and ability to elevate the dealership to this extraordinary level of performance.

> **Ross and his team have worked hard to achieve this recognition**
> – Todd McDonald

"To be presented with this recognition means a dealership excels across all metrics, which include outstanding sales volume and growth, business management and customer satisfaction.

"Ross and his team have worked incredibly hard to achieve this recognition.

"This award is not only testament to their efforts, but also the strength, trust and credibility of the marque as an innovator and leader in the industry."

Pukekohe Kia, south of Auckland, is part of the Ebbett Group. Its director chairman, Ben van den Engel, says: "It's an amazing honour to be presented with this global award.

"Our group vision statement is 'customers for life'. It's very pleasing they've been recognised."

Reshaping company's future

Autohub has prepared a strategic roadmap for the next three years with diversification into other markets being a key focus for the business in that period.

The vehicle logistics company is now under the leadership of Jim Shi, who was appointed as permanent chief executive at the beginning of August last year, and his early tasks have included a review of operations and setting priorities for the future.

He has taken over the day-to-day running of the company from Frank Willett, who stepped down as managing director last year and is now a non-executive director on the board.

Shi, who has been with the company since September 2014, says collaboration and teamwork will be key to Autohub achieving its goals in alignment with its parent, Heiwa Auto Group.

"It's been interesting coming in with a fresh perspective," he told Autofile. "We've had a significant focus on operational efficiency because the market and external environment have been very challenging.

"The main focus has been on what we can do better internally, and we've had a comprehensive review of how we do things functionally and operationally.

"As a result of that we've made some good changes to what we do and moving forward there will be plenty more to come.

"We have a set of priorities for the future and have set out a strategic roadmap for the next three years. We're working through things to achieve that.

"Diversification into other markets will be a focus area and taking care of our clients through a customer-centric approach is among our priorities moving forward."

Shi's first role at Autohub was North Island business development manager. He later became national business development manager and oversaw the business development team.

Since then he has gradually become involved in more senior management initiatives and was made interim chief executive at the beginning of 2024 before taking on the role permanently in August.

"Coming from within the organisation has definitely been a tremendous benefit to where I'm at today. Having that institutional knowledge from working in the business from the ground up is valuable.

"I've spent the past nine years at the coalface understanding our customers and their challenges. Knowing that has helped us a lot in identifying opportunities for Autohub and the wider Heiwa group."

He says Autohub had a decent 2024 despite trading conditions delivering "headwinds and challenges", including importers trying to find the right balance between the availability and affordability of stock from Japan.

"Changing and ambitious regulations, coupled with Chinese new-car competition, pose a dual challenge for the used sector," Shi adds. "Customers are not finding the right stock at the right price point to come into the market and that will be a continued challenge.

"It will be interesting to see how Trump's tariffs may also change the dynamics of production of left and right-hand vehicles in China. We might see an influx of cars coming in from Chinese OEMs with aggressive pricing strategies, which will also pose competition to our sector and business.

"We can't do anything to address issues outside our control so we're making sure operations internally are as efficient as possible and we will continue monitoring the regulatory environment."

Jim Shi, chief executive officer of Autohub NZ

Shi notes the recent downturn has affected all sectors and industries and there have been peaks and troughs.

"It's been one of the most challenging times but I'm sure we will slowly come out of the trough and get stability. Hopefully that will be sooner rather than later. The macro indicators are heading in the right direction but as with all things recovery can take time."

Besides diversification, high on Shi's list of goals is the company creating a culture where everyone is working together towards common goals.

Autohub NZ has 18 staff in its core logistics division and about the same again across its subsidiaries, "a small but robust team".

"I run a democratic leadership style. Collaboration and working together towards our shared goals are what I value most.

"I want to make Autohub a very good place to work at and a place that everyone feels very proud to be a part of.

"One of the biggest things is to ensure we have a robust culture. That stems from all aspects of what we do on a daily basis and keeping staff informed of what the company is doing at a high level.

"We also have a couple of outside work initiatives to maintain and foster that teamwork, including taking a role in Round The Bays to promote healthy living and work-life balance.

"I want my tenure and legacy to be of someone who has had a positive impact and grown the business sustainably through a culture of collaboration."

Willett, who spent spent seven years running Autohub before moving from Auckland to Blenheim in December, is full of praise for Shi.

"Jim has an excellent relationship with our key customers and has got his finger on the pulse," says Willett. "He's also done a bachelor of commerce degree and he can now put some of those skills towards his new role, which he has grasped solidly."

Cleaner cars improve air quality

Air pollution from vehicles is coming down but the harmful emissions they produce still have a social cost, including hospitalisations and premature deaths, of more than $10 billion a year.

A report published by the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and Stats NZ says adding to the problem is that the fleet reached its largest size to date in 2022 and annual kilometres travelled by motorists have increased over recent decades.

It adds air pollutants from vehicle exhaust emissions per kilometre driven will likely reduce over time, but other non-exhaust air pollution including from tyre and road wear will continue to increase.

The conclusions appear in the latest three-yearly update about air quality in this country, which brings together research literature and updated Stats NZ indicator data.

Titled Our Air 2024, the report shows air-pollutant levels have decreased at most monitoring sites over the past eight years and improvements to the fleet are helping to reduce emissions.

However, it adds road vehicles still contribute significantly to different types of air pollution and were the largest source of nitrogen oxides (NOx) at 39 per cent in 2019.

Commenting on how things have changed since 2021's report it says transport, in particular motor-vehicle emissions, remains a large source of air pollutants.

This includes PM2.5 – fine, airborne particulate matter that's small enough to be inhaled and can enter the bloodstream – and nitrogen dioxide (NO2).

Natasha Lewis, of the Ministry for the Environment, says lower-emissions vehicles are helping cut air pollution

"Transport emissions were lower for all monitored pollutants except sulphur dioxide [SO2] in 2019 than 2012," it explains.

"Engine and fuel improvements continue to contribute to reductions. This is despite increases in the total kilometres travelled in a year, fleet numbers and the proportion of diesel vehicles. In 2022 we reached the largest fleet size to date with the largest percentage of diesels – 21 per cent."

Burning wood for home heating was another main contributor to air pollution and continues to be a major source of PM2.5.

Looking ahead to 2050, transport and home heating are expected to remain significant sources of pollution here. This is despite technological advances to improve efficiency and reduced user costs providing better air quality.

The report notes "critical uncertainties" remain with the direction of change unclear for long-term transport and environmental policies, trends in remote working, and the pace of uptake of EVs and active transport compared with other modes.

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"It's highly likely air pollutants from exhaust emissions will continue to reduce, while other air-pollutant emissions – tyre and road wear – will continue to increase. How pollution from transport will evolve and impact public health is uncertain."

Air pollutants from tailpipes are expected to maintain a downward trend as more people move to lower-emissions cars, but it's predicted this will only gradually affect air quality because of how long vehicles remain on our roads.

"The average age of our fleet was 14.6 years in 2022 and older vehicles tend to be less efficient. A high proportion of less efficient vehicles will remain in the fleet for many years."

The findings also show the proportion of diesel vehicles, which contribute disproportionately to the health impacts from air pollution, has been growing steadily and shows no sign of slowing soon.

Used diesels entering the fleet in 2020 that didn't meet new efficiency standards included 30 per cent of diesel heavy commercials, eight per cent of diesel light commercials and 27 per cent of diesel cars.


Non-exhaust air pollutant emissions, such as tyre and road wear, are tipped to increase

How much EV uptake will affect the fleet's composition is further muddied with the adoption of zero-emitters sensitive to financial incentives and access to charging facilities. In 2024, less than 2.5 per cent of the fleet was fully electric.

The report also draws attention to non-exhaust pollution, including brake and tyre wear and road dust, noting factors such as the fleet's size and kilometres driven will significantly influence the impact of those areas.

Data shows these factors are increasing and are expected to continue to do so out to 2050. "The composition of the fleet and how vehicles are used, such as in congested areas or rural open roads, are other factors in how much air pollution they produce."

Public-transport use is projected to increase significantly, especially in Auckland, but this will likely have only a marginal impact on air quality because the overall share of such trips is expected to remain below 10 per cent.

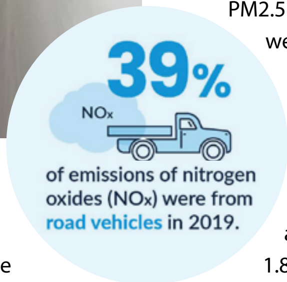
The report reveals road freight has expanded annually for the past 10 years. This is anticipated to continue for at least the next three decades, which will contribute to exhaust and non-exhaust air pollutants.

It adds: "Health impacts from transport are unlikely to reduce significantly even while some improvements to air quality are possible."

IMPACT ON HUMANS

Air pollutants from New Zealand's fleet are a key factor for a high number of hospitalisations and premature deaths, and the report warns this is likely to continue for years given the lifespan of many vehicles.

The impacts of air pollution from vehicles are higher than previously understood, causing health issues for thousands of people each year along with substantial social costs.



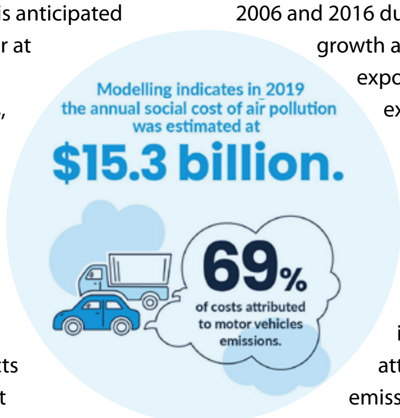
In 2019, human-made PM2.5 and NO2 pollution were associated with 3,239 premature deaths, 13,237 hospitalisations, 12,653 cases of childhood asthma and more than 1.8 million restricted days when symptoms were sufficient to prevent usual activities, such as working.

Premature deaths associated with air pollution represented almost 10 per cent of all 34,260 deaths in Aotearoa in 2019.

During that year, vehicle fumes accounted for 71 per cent of estimated total hospitalisations, nearly 9,400 cases, and 68 per cent of total premature deaths or 2,247 cases.

The findings were based on updated data from 2019 using the health and air pollution in New Zealand (Hapinz) model.

"Estimated health impacts associated with human-made air pollution increased between 2006 and 2016 due to population growth and rising NO2 exposure," the report explains.



"This period saw a 28 per cent increase in premature deaths and a 39 per cent increase in hospitalisations attributed to vehicle emissions.

"Population growth and urbanisation contribute to increasing health impacts from exposure to pollution. Moreover, cumulative effects of long-term exposure can remain even after air quality has improved."

Annual social costs from air pollution were estimated at $15.3 billion in 2019, with such emissions from vehicles accounting for 69 per cent, or $10.5b. Most of the remaining costs were attributed to domestic fires.

The health impacts and social costs from human-made air pollution are higher than previously thought based on a better understanding of the health and social damage caused by vehicles.

"Since cost estimates presented in this report were calculated, the NZTA has increased the statistical value of a human life by more than two-and-a-half times, from $4.5 million to $12.5m. This means future estimates will be even higher."

DROP IN EMISSIONS

Natasha Lewis, the MfE's deputy secretary of strategy, stewardship and performance, says emissions from vehicles, aviation, shipping and rail were lower in 2019 than in 2012 for all monitored pollutants, except SO2.

"Air pollutants from exhaust emissions are reducing per kilometre as a result of emissions standards, lower-emissions vehicles, and improvements in engine technology and fuel quality," she explains.

Emissions of carbon monoxide were down 47 per cent, or by more than 85,000 tonnes, in that period and NOx emissions fell by 12 per cent or more than 8,000 tonnes.

Road vehicles were the largest source of NOx in 2019 with the greatest contribution coming from diesels. Fuel combustion, particularly diesel, is also a major source of PM2.5. Wear of brake pads and tyres, and road-surface dust, are leading sources of PM10.

Air quality is improving in most places where monitored. Some 87 per cent of the NZTA's 114 sites had improving NO2 concentrations from 2014-23, while 75 per cent of sites had improving PM2.5 levels between 2016 and 2023.

However, officials add some locations have shown worsening quality and pollutant levels, and many improving sites are still above World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines.

"More than that, for most air pollutants no level may be safe," the report says. "While levels may be improving or within guidelines, reduced air quality can still impact people's health.

"Monitoring of air quality generally takes place in areas where we expect pollution to be highest and where people are exposed.

"Typically, it focuses on urban areas where the major sources of pollutants tend to be concentrated and where we expect the impacts on people to be highest."

PM2.5 concentrations continue to improve at the majority of monitoring sites, but all of them were above the 24-hour WHO guidelines from 2020-23.

Likewise, NO2 concentrations continue to improve at most sites but 60 per cent were above the recommended levels during the same period.

Domestic shipping has also been identified as a significant source of SO2, contributing 16 per cent of all such emissions in 2019, although an international treaty now limits sulphur levels in ship fuel.

However, Our Air 2024 notes most vessels use relatively low-quality fuel so some modern engines may produce high emissions of other pollutants.

Making power system 'smarter'

The government has started work to enable a smarter electricity system to boost energy efficiency.

It's looking to change legislation to bring in standards so there's more flexibility when it comes to demand.

One of the ideas is amending the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act to support the uptake of smart EV chargers to improve consumers' ability to switch "fuelling up" times from network peaks.

While currently lacking in detail, it's touted as one of the coalition's "action plans" in the second emissions reduction plan (ERP2).

The proposal is among the government's ways to stoke demand for EVs, sales of which substantially dropped last year compared to 2023.

It's also launching a review into how public infrastructure for electric cars is paid for and wants the country to have 10,000 public charging points by 2030, as reported in the January issue of Autofile.

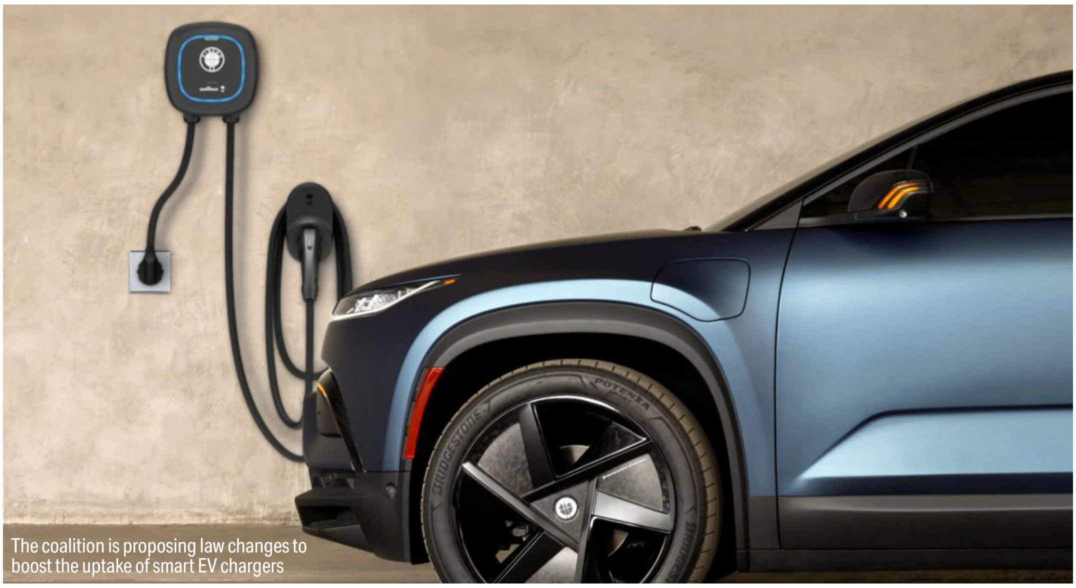
Increasing renewable energy and enabling technology, such as battery storage, is on the agenda although there's no mention in ERP2 about a stewardship scheme for end-of-life EV batteries.

However, "some advances – such as biofuels – can replace emissions-intensive products", states the plan, while "innovation can fundamentally shift how we do things".

It adds: "New technologies, such as smart chargers or other smart appliances, can bring efficiencies and lower operating costs.

"There are emerging technologies that can significantly reduce emissions across the economy. Simpler pathways will allow these tools to reach end-users faster.

"Advances in energy storage – for example, batteries, grid management, demand flexibility, smart meters and fuel cells – can help balance electricity supply and demand.



The coalition is proposing law changes to boost the uptake of smart EV chargers

"New Zealand has abundant renewable energy potential. Harnessing this will help meet our emissions budgets, reduce dependency on imported fuels, and support the reliability and affordability of the energy system."

Emissions from energy use make up 37 per cent of New Zealand's gross greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which includes 17.5 per cent from energy for transport.

Another key goal is doubling renewable energy through the Electrify NZ work programme. This includes progressing faster consenting for big projects. The government also intends to have a new regime for offshore renewable energy in place by mid-2025.

FOCUS ON SECTORS

Decarbonising the shipping industry is on the radar. Along with domestic aviation, it makes up about eight per cent of transport emissions.

The government's role is to "facilitate discussions through existing forums, consider regulatory barriers and ensure New Zealand's interests are represented".

It adds international co-operation will also prepare us to use new technologies as they become available.

NEW ZEALAND'S EMISSIONS PROFILE

POLLUTION BY INDUSTRY	
Agriculture	47.8%
Energy	40.5%
Industrial processes	6.5%
Waste	5.1%
POLLUTION FROM TRANSPORT	
Light-vehicle fleet	62.8%
Heavy fleet	28.2%
Domestic aviation	7.5%
Railways	0.9%
Domestic shipping	0.7%

Sources: EECA (MfE and MBIE) and ERP2. Percentages are rounded. Carbon-dioxide emissions from light vehicles make up 14.5 per cent of energy emissions

One idea is to create the conditions needed for "green shipping routes" by 2035, essentially low or zero-carbon corridors.

These could allow New Zealand to avoid extra costs, such as carbon tariffs on ships or goods, based on voyage emissions and maintain common regulations with regional partners so operators can easily move the same vessels around all ports.

Despite axeing many initiatives tabled by the previous government, the coalition realises public transport needs to be reliable and accessible.

It has proposed investments in several Auckland projects set for completion over the next decade. These include the Eastern Busway from Pakuranga to Botany, Northwest Rapid Transit, a busway from the airport to Botany and the city rail link.

It's also ploughing $801 million into the Wairarapa and Manawatu rail lines to make commuter services more reliable.

Most public-transport authorities have already started using zero-emissions buses and from July this year, they can only procure zero-emitters.

About $44.7m in funding has been reconfirmed over four years to speed up the deployment of these vehicles, and encourage innovative approaches for their rollout and infrastructure.

The automotive industry needs to keep a watching brief on another part of ERP2, which details plans to develop a sustainable finance strategy and tax measures to provide confidence on environmental activities.

The plan states officials will co-operate with Australia on policies and aligning regulatory approaches to position the region as a "robust green finance market".

The government will also work with international partners and finance sectors to reduce barriers to investment.

In addition, ERP2 has key actions in the innovation space, such as removing market barriers to allow for new technologies to be trialled in this country.

Building and construction have been included in the plan. If you own real estate as part of your business, it's worth knowing the government wants to make it easier to retrofit buildings to improve energy efficiency.

And voluntary performance ratings for non-residential buildings are being expanded to provide credible sustainability data to owners and users.

Shipping companies are looking to decarbonise. Wallenius Wilhelmsen, for example, is launching a re-engineered bunker-adjustment factor to prepare for future fuels on its path to net-zero emissions by 2040

BUDGETS 'ON TRACK'

ERP2 sets out policies and strategies to meet New Zealand's emissions budget 2026-30 with the coalition saying it's committed to delivering on targets in a cost-effective way while growing the economy.

The plan reports the country is on track to hit its emissions budgets for 2022-25 and 2026-30 with the biggest reductions expected to come from forestry, energy and agriculture.

The government considers we will meet our 2050 target of net-zero emissions for all GHGs other than biogenic methane, which it expects will be 24-47 per cent below 2017 levels.

ERP2 is founded on the five pillars of the government's climate strategy. These include resilient infrastructure, well-prepared communities and credible markets to support the transition.

The others are affordable and abundant clean energy, world-leading climate innovation and nature-based solutions.

The emissions trading scheme (ETS) is the coalition's major tool to cut GHGs, but independent watchdogs have warned it needs major reforms to have a serious impact on climate change.

Under the scheme, producers of carbon dioxide (CO_2) must buy and surrender enough credits to cover their emissions.

They can purchase these at government auctions for at least $64 a tonne or privately from forestry companies, whose trees suck in CO_2, or anyone with surplus credits to sell.

Because of a plentiful stockpile of credits, demand to buy them at these auctions has been muted for two years. In turn, that has depressed the price of releasing a tonne of CO_2, which lowers any financial incentive for companies to cut emissions.

Rod Carr, former chairman of the Climate Change Commission, has previously warned the ETS will probably fail as a tool to deliver emissions budgets because it's unfit for purpose. "There are too many units on issue, too many units which can be issued and the obligations of emitters are too few. Unless there's radical reform, the ETS will not play a part in signalling and rewarding emissions-reducing technology take-up."

Carr, who left his role at the commission in December, adds that as long as planting pine trees remains cheaper than cutting CO_2 emissions, it will put a lid on companies needing to reduce their GHGs.

On the flipside, the government wants to strengthen market governance of the ETS and update its settings.

Mixed fortunes for segments

The top-selling new-vehicle segment of 2024 was medium-sized SUVs, according to the Motor Industry Association (MIA).

This part of New Zealand's market notched up 30,297 units although that was down by 20.9 per cent from 38,293 in 2023.

Medium SUVs claimed 23.5 per cent of 2024's market compared to 25.7 per cent in the previous year.

Next up were compact SUVs with 28,042 registrations. Their market share came in at 21.8 per cent. Last year's total for these models was down by 13.5 per cent from 32,430 in 2023.

Sales in the pick-up, chassis cab four-by-four segment predictably went up during 2024 – by 13 per cent – in the absence of clean car discount (CCD) penalties.

They came in at 22,368 versus 19,800 in 2023 when their share was 13.3 per cent. Last year, registrations in this segment were 17.4 per cent.

There were 10,735 large SUVs sold in 2024 for a year-on-year drop of 9.1 per cent compared with 11,805 in 2023, while the light car segment tumbled by 33.4 per cent from 9,658 to 6,428.

Sales of new battery vehicles (BEVs) fell by 68.8 per cent last year when compared to 2023. There were 6,748 registered in 2024 for a market share of 5.2 per cent.

That was in stark contrast to 2023, the CCD's final year, when BEVs' share of the market was 14.5 per cent and 21,611 units.

It was a similar story for plug-in hybrids, which returned a year-on-year decrease of 61.3 per cent from 9,005 to 3,484. Their market share dropped from six per cent to 2.7 per cent.

There was some good news when it came to reducing tailpipe emissions. Sales of fossil-fuel hybrids totalled 34,736 in 2024, up by 18.5 per cent. Notably, they made up 27 per cent of last year's market compared to 19.7 per cent in 2023.

Tesla's Model Y was 2024's best-selling BEV in New Zealand with 826 units but down from 3,936 in 2023, according to the MIA

Out of 128,828 new vehicles sold in 2024 – down from 148,973 – 83,860 had internal combustion engines for 65.1 per cent of the market compared to 59.8 per cent in 2023.

The proportion of new vehicles sold to businesses rose last year. This buyer type represented 52.5 per cent of the market thanks to 67,631 registrations, up from a market share of 49.4 per cent in 2023 when the total was 73,641.

Private transactions came to 41,229 in 2024 for a market share of 32 per cent. Rentals accounted for 13.4 per cent with 17,216 units, while there were 2,752 government purchases for 2.1 per cent.

LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Toyota remained as Japan's best-selling brand last year despite underperforming in a weak market. It secured 1,355,581 registrations, down by 14.1 per cent from 1,578,105 in 2023.

Suzuki again came second on 721,785, up by 10.9 per cent, and Honda was third on the back of a 12.5 per cent jump to 668,414.

Nissan was fourth with 475,569, down by 1.1 per cent, and Daihatsu plummeted to fifth with a 38.3 per cent slide to 366,635 following a compliance-test scandal.

The top 10 was completed by, in order, Mazda, Mitsubishi, Subaru, Lexus and Isuzu.

Mercedes-Benz was again the largest foreign car brand in Japan in 2024, and came 11th overall, with a 3.8 per cent jump to 53,195.

Overall, Japan's new-vehicle market contracted by 7.5 per cent to 4,421,494 units in 2024, which includes kei-class models, cars, commercial vehicles, mini commercials and buses.

Toyota claimed the top three passenger models, excluding mini-cars, with its Corolla the most popular on 166,956 units – down by 7.8 per cent.

The Yaris was second with 166,162 and the Sienta third on 132,332 for drops of 14.5 and 16.1 per cent respectively. Nissan's Note was fourth with 101,766 followed by Honda's Freed on 85,368 to complete the top five.

The top 10 was completed by the Toyota Prius, Nissan Serena, Toyota Alphard, Honda Vezel and Toyota Voxy.

The top-selling kei-class model of 2024 was Honda's N-Box on 206,272 units.

ACROSS THE TASMAN

Australia's new-vehicle industry set a record with 1,237,287 registrations in 2024, up from its previous best of 1,216,780 in 2023.

Toyota was the best-selling brand on 241,296 sales for 19.8 per cent of the market.

Next were Ford on 100,170 and 8.2 per cent, and Mazda with 95,987 and 7.9 per cent. Kia and Mitsubishi completed the top five with 81,787 and 74,547 respectively.

Ford's Ranger was the top model on 62,593 units, down by 1.2 per cent year on year, while Toyota's RAV4 climbed by 92.2 per cent to 58,718.

The top five was completed by the Toyota Hilux on 53,499, Isuzu's D-Max with 30,194 and Mitsubishi's Outlander on 27,613.

Despite its record-breaking year, industry reaction to 2024's figures has been subdued with consumers facing a tough start to this year because of economic and political challenges.

Tony Weber, chief executive of the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, says strong sales in the first half of 2024 set up the full-year result, but momentum was lost as the year progressed.

He adds: "The second half showed the private segment falling to very low levels as interest rates and general cost-of-living pressures impacted families.

"Customers are increasingly making choices regarding environmental outcomes and the associated total cost of ownership of moving to low-emissions technologies."

BEVs claimed 6.1 per cent of the market with 74,612 sales in Australia last year. Hybrids came in on 14.1 per cent and 172,696 units. The total for PHEVs was 23,163 or 1.9 per cent.

Toyota's Corolla was Japan's most popular model last year, excluding kei-class vehicles

Maximise value with digital audit

The start of a new year is an ideal time for dealers to assess their advertising strategies with a comprehensive digital audit.

I always encourage clients to use this opportunity to review their previous year's marketing investment, evaluate their returns and identify areas for improvement to drive even greater success going ahead.

I could sit here and list all the benefits of auditing your marketing strategy. However, to fully understand the value, it can be worth reflecting on real-world examples of car dealers who have gone through the process and reaped the rewards.

Part-way through 2024, I caught up with one of our clients, Greg, to discuss his advertising strategy. At the time, he had been relatively conservative with marketing by preferring to invest in his owned assets, such as his website and social-media accounts.

His small advertising investment was on the likes of Facebook Marketplace and Trade Me. However, he was becoming increasingly frustrated with rising costs and knew he couldn't rely on vehicle listings alone to reach in-market buyers.

Greg asked me to undertake an audit of his digital activity, to identify if there were any opportunities to increase traffic to his website and drive more leads. This revealed his site needed to perform better in search rankings so he could be more easily found by would-be purchasers browsing the internet.

JAMES HENDRY
Director, sales and operations
AdTorque Edge NZ

As part of our recommended strategy, we implemented search-engine optimisation on his site, which ensured it appeared higher in search results.

We also set up Google Search ads and live inventory campaigns on Facebook, which engaged people who were actively in-market and drove them to the dealership's website.

Three months into the campaign, Greg was thrilled with the results. He had received a 95 per cent increase in visitor numbers to his website and a 440 per cent surge in leads at a cost of only $27.72 each.

Following the successful implementation of this new strategy, his confidence in digital marketing grew substantially. This empowered him to invest further and drive even greater performance for his business.

A digital audit doesn't need to be exclusively limited to your advertising activities.

Sandra was offering a trade-in valuation tool on her website as a way of attracting more customer engagement. She was, however, concerned the product wasn't generating the level of enquiry anticipated.

Our team investigated and found that Sandra's clients were tending to overlook the valuation tool after landing on her site.

Our recommendation was to increase the tool's visibility by introducing a dedicated landing page for trade-in valuations that aimed to improve search ranking performance when internet users were researching such options.

We added a banner to the homepage that promoted the tool and clicked directly through to it.

Finally, a pop-up was inserted on all listings on the stock locator, so customers looking to purchase a car knew they could also value their trade-in.

The results of these minor and low-cost adjustments to Sandra's dealership site had a significant impact. The trade-in valuation tool became one of the largest drivers of leads for the business, generating more than 200 enquiries in three months at a cost of $1.97 each.

While 20 per cent of these leads were from people simply looking to sell, 80 per cent were also in the market to buy new or used vehicles. Her team was ultimately able to convert some 33 of the leads into sales.

Conducting a comprehensive audit of your dealership's marketing activity allows you to set yourself up for success. It ensures all digital assets, from your website and social media to paid advertising channels, align with current business goals and customer expectations.

It also provides you with actionable insights to improve your digital marketing, ultimately driving more qualified leads, better engagement and increased sales for the year ahead.

People's real names in this article have been withheld

Industry movers

DAME PATSY REDDY is now chair of the Climate Change Commission. She was the 21st Governor-General of New Zealand from 2016-21.

In 2014, she became a Dame Companion of the NZ Order of Merit for services to the arts and business, and in 2016 was made a Dame Grand Companion of the Order for services to the state.

Her appointment follows the conclusion of Dr Rod Carr's term, which ended in December.

Felicity Underhill and Devon McLean have been appointed as commissioners until September 2028 to replace Catherine Leining and James Renwick.

Underhill has worked in the energy industry for more than 20 years and has been involved in fuel-transition programmes around hydrogen. McLean has had a long executive and governance career in forestry and conservation.

ARMIN GUTTKE has become chairman and president of Intelligent Transport Systems New Zealand (ITSNZ).

He succeeds Mike Rudge who left in November to join the NZTA's board after six years as a director, including four as chair.

Guttke, pictured, has more than 20 years' leadership experience with knowledge of technology, business and political challenges facing the transport industry.

He has been a director on the board of ITSNZ for around four years with responsibility for member engagement, promotion and advocacy.

Guttke says: "I will continue working with our board and members to deliver strategic and policy actions that achieve our long-term objectives in supporting a more efficient, sustainable, inclusive and safer transport system."

JULIA HOARE has been re-elected as a director of Port of Tauranga Ltd and currently chairs it board.

Hoare, pictured, is a director of Comvita, and director and chair of the audit and risk committees of Auckland Airport and Meridian Energy. She's also a board member of Northport and Primeport Timaru.

Other directors re-elected to Port of Tauranga's board are Fraser Whineray and Sir Robert McLeod. The port's board has determined that all its directors, except Fraser Whineray and Douglas Leeder, are independent.

BROOKE FRANCIS and **LUCY SPOORS** have become ambassadors of Mazda. They were silver medallists at the 2020 Olympic Games, Francis in the women's double sculls and Spoors in the women's eight.

Brooke Francis

They then took gold in the women's double sculls at the Paris Games in 2024. Between them, they have four World Championships, eight World Cup wins and, most recently, bronze at the World Coastal Championships.

Lucy Spoors

David Hodge, Mazda NZ's managing director, says: "They are among the world's best in their sport and have both juggled parenthood while remaining at elite level. They are remarkable role models."

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

Changing times at blue oval as dealers retire

Two industry stalwarts have retired with new dealer principals being appointed at Ford franchises.

Richard Burns has taken on the role at Avon City Motors in Christchurch from John Luxton, and Paul Shanks has replaced David Wills at Ruahine Motors in central Hawke's Bay.

John Luxton

Luxton and Burns worked closely in the run-up to the new year to ensure a "seamless transition".

Richard Burns

Burns has an extensive automotive background having joined Avon City Ford as general manager in July 2024. Before that, he was a dealer principal with the Colonial Motor Company in central Otago.

David Wills

Shanks, meanwhile, has taken a wealth of knowledge and experience into his role at Ruahine Motors, and is well-regarded in the business community in Waipukurau as well as its surrounding areas.

Paul Shanks

"On behalf of the entire team, congratulations to the new appointees and a huge thank you to John and David for their years of service and dedication to the brand," says Annaliese Atina, managing director of Ford NZ.

"We've been fortunate to have such passionate and loyal Ford supporters with John and David. They have both worked beyond their own dealerships in supporting our dealer network.

"Both served on Ford's dealer council and made significant contributions to the positive direction the brand has taken in New Zealand.

"We wish both all the best with the next chapters of their lives. I have no doubt we will see both involved and supporting Ford in some capacity going forward."

Agency appoints new boss

Brett Gliddon has been appointed chief executive of the NZTA to replace Nicole Rosie.

He was already acting in the role and was group general manager of transport services for the past five-and-a-half years.

Brett Gliddon

Gliddon started with the agency in 2009 when he became principal project manager and led the team managing the investigation phase of the $1.2 billion Puhoi to Wellsford motorway.

He was then highway manager for Tauranga for three years before being promoted to highway manager for the Auckland and Northland regions, a position he held until mid-2017.

After that, Gliddon led a team for one year to design an integrated transport system with the NZTA's partners as senior manager of system design.

Promotion to general manager of the same department followed and was a role he held for 15 months before becoming general manager of transport services.

Gliddon, who has a bachelor of engineering, with honours, in civil engineering from the University of Canterbury, says he's looking forward to the wider strategic responsibilities that come with leading the agency and delivering on expected performance.

Tackling dilemma with classification

Regulations are supposed to make it easy to categorise vehicles based on their use.

But the new trend of recreational vehicles which look like commercials is making things tricky. These include utes and SUVs that are basically cars in disguise.

Built to carry people and sometimes tow the likes of boats, they're not doing the hard work that true commercials are designed for. This creates a challenge when keeping classifications fair and consistent.

In New Zealand, vehicles are split into categories based on purpose. Passenger vehicles, such as sedans, hatchbacks and SUVs, fall under classes such as MA, MB or MC. Commercials – utes, vans and trucks – are NA or NB.

These classifications help decide matters such as safety requirements, registration rules and other legal standards.

The big difference between these two types of vehicles is what they're manufactured to do or at least that's the intention. Passenger models are for carrying people, commercial vehicles are for moving goods.

To make this distinction, we look at things like how many seats a model has, how much space is dedicated to cargo and gross vehicle mass.

For instance, vehicles with big cargo areas and minimal seating are usually commercial. On the other hand, those designed with comfortable seating for people are categorised as passenger vehicles.

This system worked well when vehicle designs were simpler. However, it's struggling to keep up with current trends with double-cab utes and SUVs blurring the lines.

They may have five or more seats, just like a typical car, but also include trays or large cargo areas. In reality, many are being used for recreational purposes, like shifting people or towing boats instead of carrying goods.

The issue gets bigger with commercials allowed higher allowances for social and environmental harm, such as carbon-dioxide emissions, because they fill an essential need. They transport goods, support businesses and increase productivity, which are benefits everyone relies on.

Recreational vehicles, even if they look like commercials, don't provide broader societal benefits. They're mainly for personal use and there's no reason they should get the same allowances. This mismatch creates an uneven playing field and raises questions about whether the rules are still fit for purpose.

In other jurisdictions, such as Australia, this trend is changing in recent regulation. Recreational utes aren't only being classified as commercials, but the allowance is also being extended to heavy recreational SUVs. This further widens the gap between actual use and classification.

New Zealand should resist harmonising with this approach and, instead, move in the opposite direction. By ensuring recreational models are correctly classified as passenger vehicles, we can maintain fairness and ensure the system reflects real-world usage.

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

To fix this, we need to update how we classify vehicles to match modern designs and usage.

First up, the definitions of passenger and commercial vehicles should be clearer. For instance, passenger models might include those dedicating more than half of their interior to seats and creature comforts.

It's time to align the rules to ensure fairness

If a vehicle has five or more seats and only a small cargo area, such as a tray, it should be classified as passenger.

Commercial models, on the other hand, should be when more than half of the interior is for carrying goods or specialised equipment.

For vehicles that could fit either category, a utility test could help. This would look at how much space is for people versus goods and whether they have commercial features, such as tie-down points or heavy-duty cargo rails.

It would be ideal if we had a way to audit or have buyers certify that commercial vehicles are for commercial use.

Another step is adjusting the rules to ensure similar models are treated the same way. Recreational vehicles with lots of seats and minimal goods-carrying capacity should follow the same standards as other cars no matter how they look.

Owners of vehicles that have been misclassified could face fines or be made to reclassify with extra fees applied if needed.

Manufacturers should also be held accountable to prove their products match the categories they're marketed under.

Updating classifications would make the system much fairer. It would ensure the rules reflect how vehicles are actually used and not just how they are designed to look. This would give manufacturers, importers and consumers clear guidelines and reduce confusion.

It would also level the playing field so no one gets unfair advantages based on outdated regulations.

By ensuring only vehicles that truly support productivity and societal needs get higher allowances, we can better align the system with its intent.

Encouraging more accurate classifications could even push marques to design models that are more functional and better suited to their actual purposes.

With today's mix of recreational and commercial-style vehicles, it's time to align the rules with how they are really used, and ensure fairness and transparency.

Treating vehicles with commercial looks but passenger purposes appropriately would create a more balanced system that works for everyone and show how policy can evolve to meet challenges in a fast-changing market.

The month that was... February

February 16, 1998

January sales an average 24% down


AUTOfile
SHIFT YOUR DEALER FINANCING INTO A HIGHER GEAR
UDC
MVDI Reaction Awaited to Japan Plan
January Sales An Average 24% Down
ALLIED FINANCE
Dealer Finance Specialists
Ph 0-9-520 0097 Fax 0-9-520 3700

Finding a positive spin on January 1998's new vehicle and used-import sales, and used arrivals, was an almost impossible task.

Year-on-year registrations of new passenger vehicles were down by 22 per cent, registrations of used-imported cars dropped 26 per cent, arrivals of used-imported cars were down 29 per cent and used-commercial imports fell by 24 per cent. None of that was at all indicative of a much-needed turnaround in New Zealand's automotive market.

In January 1998, just 4,060 new cars, 898 new commercials, 6,854 used cars and 701 used commercials were retailed, according to the Land Transport Safety Authority.

It wasn't uncommon for December and January's sales of new cars to be out of kilter with the rest of the year as retailers moved to hold December registrations to the following month.

If the two months were taken together, they showed just an eight per cent drop in sales compared to the previous December and January for a different result than the 23 per cent drop of January alone. Combining the two months with used imports showed an average decline of 15 per cent and not 26 per cent for just January.

February 11, 2005

ANCAP group in Auckland


autofile
Dealer margins undermined

A meeting of the Australasian New Car Assessment Program (ANCAP) committee was held at the AA's offices.

Those attending included Andrew Justice, principal vehicle engineer for safety from Land Transport NZ, Stella Stocks, general manager of technical services for the AA, Michael Case, chief engineer of vehicles for the Royal Automotive Club of Victoria, and Samantha Cockfield, manager of road safety for the Transport Accident Commission.

Others were James Hurnall, director of technical services for the Australian Automobile Association, Jack Haley, policy specialist for vehicles, member and community relations for the National Roads and Motorists' Association, Ross McArthur, manager of vehicle safety for VicRoads and chairman of the committee, and Chris Coxon, of the Department of Transport and Urban Planning's transport planning agency.

The next ANCAP release, featuring data from tests performed in Europe but using Australian and New Zealand-specification models, was due for release later that month. Results from the latest Australian tests were due to made available in May 2005.

February 21, 2000

Dealers' licences cannot be renewed


autofile
UDC
Odometer Fraud Could Cost Dealers Millions
ALLIED FINANCE
Dealer Finance Specialists
Ph 0-9-520 0097 Fax 0-9-520 3700

Car dealers who had lost their traders' licences for any fraudulent activity couldn't immediately take out a new one under the name of a different company.

That was the categorical statement from Steve Downes, of the Motor Vehicle Dealers Institute (MVDI), in response to claims made by Labour MP Harry Duynhoven and the Consumers' Institute.

Duynhoven said the situation amazed him when guilty car traders merely had to surrender their licence and be issued with another by the MVDI to escape paying compensation costs.

But Downes said: "An application has to be made for a new one to the licensing board and names that appear on the application are checked to see if they have previously had their licences removed.

"The only problem arises when such people's names do not appear on the application, and they're operating the company and selling vehicles. Then they are trading illegally.

"If our regional staff are notified that a disqualified dealer is operating, in most cases they will check out the information, contact the registered operators of the business and give them 24 hours to get rid of the person or face similar disciplinary action to that given to the disqualified trader."

February 3, 2006

Hammer changes hands


autofile
Second rogue trader prosecuted
Hammer changes hands
LIVE FROM JAPAN

Hammer Car Auctions changed ownership when managing director John Boswell, who had had a relationship with the company for the previous 10 years and was for many years MD of Turners Auctions, took a 100 per cent holding in the company.

Boswell said: "This was not something I had been planning, but when the opportunity arose to acquire total ownership, I grabbed it."

He added the company was in good shape with sales having risen six per cent over the past year, which was a result given the recent downturn across the entire car market. Acknowledging it had experienced some challenges in recent years, Boswell said the opportunity to purchase a full holding in the company allowed the slate to be completely wiped clean and for it to build on its recent growth.

It was essentially "business as usual" with Hammer remaining committed to its market strength of the under-$4,000 category in public auctions, while also looking to expand offerings in other price categories and building on its successful trade auctions.

Innovate to boost vehicle sales

What a year for car traders we've just seen with "survive until 2025" becoming the main theme.

Over the past few years, New Zealand's automotive market has experienced significant fluctuations influenced by various government policy changes before economic factors came biting.

In 2024, sales of light vehicles levelled and faced notable challenges with business owners comparing it to the downturn seen during the global financial crisis (GFC) that significantly impacted the dealer space in 2009.

Last year, the new passenger vehicles and light commercials saw a combined decline in sales of 13.6 per cent compared to 2023, according to NZTA statistics.

This decrease came in at 20,276 units, highlighting the impact of economic pressures, consumers' purchasing patterns and changes in regulations.

The total number of new light-vehicle registrations in 2024 was 128,977 and down from 2023's low total of 149,253.

Despite a slight recovery in December last year, with a 5.6 per cent increase in registrations compared to the same month in 2023, the overall trend for 2024 was very flat.

The total for 2024 was seven per cent above 2020's low sales and we need to go back to 2014 for worse annual registrations of 127,348 units.

For those of you who can remember back to the GFC, our market experienced a significant downturn.

In 2009, the total number of new-vehicle registrations was 70,048. This period was marked by economic uncertainty, reduced spending, tighter credit conditions and massive redundancies, which collectively set sales back more than a decade.

In 2014, about 3.3 million Kiwis held a driver's licence. That increased to around 3.8m in 2024 in line with an approximate 15 per cent population growth across the same period.

Based on 2014 and 2024's sales versus licensed drivers, last year effectively saw sales to 3.39 per cent of licensed drivers as opposed to 2014's 3.86 per cent.

There were 83,624 new passenger and light-commercial vehicles registered to companies in 2024, or 64.9 per cent of the total, while those sold to individuals came in at 32.2 per cent or 41,517 units. Some 2.8 per cent of registrations were undisclosed.

As for company-registered vehicles, diesel dominated with

LARRY FALLOWFIELD
Sector manager – dealers, Motor Trade Association

40.9 per cent and petrol was 24.7 per cent, or 65.6 per cent when combined. Hybrids came in at 27 per cent with battery electric vehicles (BEVs) at 4.5 per cent. Plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) finished on 2.8 per cent.

Petrol vehicles registered to private individuals topped 2024's sales with 43.5 per cent, hybrids came next with 29.4 per cent and diesel on 18.8 per cent. BEVs and PHEVs were six and 2.3 per cent respectively.

Last year's top 10 new light vehicles in New Zealand were dominated by a mix of popular brands and models with the top three having a significant portion of the market at 48.3 per cent.

The pack was led by Toyota with 30,192 units and 23.4 per cent of total registrations, Ford with 17,870 and 13.9 per cent, and Mitsubishi with 11 per cent and 14,147 units.

Utes and SUVs continued to boss 2024's market. The Ford Ranger on 9.1 per cent with 11,741 units, and Toyota's RAV4 with 8.2 per cent and 10,530 units, were the only two models to get into five figures.

The Toyota Hilux, and Mitsubishi's Triton and ASX, rounded out the top five. They made up nearly 30 per cent of sales.

In the used-imports space, 104,002 registrations amounted to the lowest trading year since 2012 when only 81,827 units were sold.

It meant this sector was down by 14.4 per cent on 2023. That wasn't helped by December's sales falling off the cliff – down by 42.7 per cent compared to the same month in 2023.

New motorcycles and scooters finished 2024 on 7,878 units, which was down by 4.7 per cent on 2023 when there were 8,270 registrations.

While 2024 presented its fair share of challenges, there are several reasons to be optimistic about the future of the market in New Zealand.

The resilience of our industry and its ability to adapt to changing circumstances bode well for the future.

As interest rates drop, we will see consumer confidence return and we can anticipate a gradual recovery in sales during 2025.

The lessons learned from the GFC and 2024's market conditions will undoubtedly assist in forming strategies that will change and encourage innovated selling.

It will be crucial for dealers to adapt and transform to meet consumer demands and achieve sustainable growth. All the best for 2025. Now it's time to thrive.

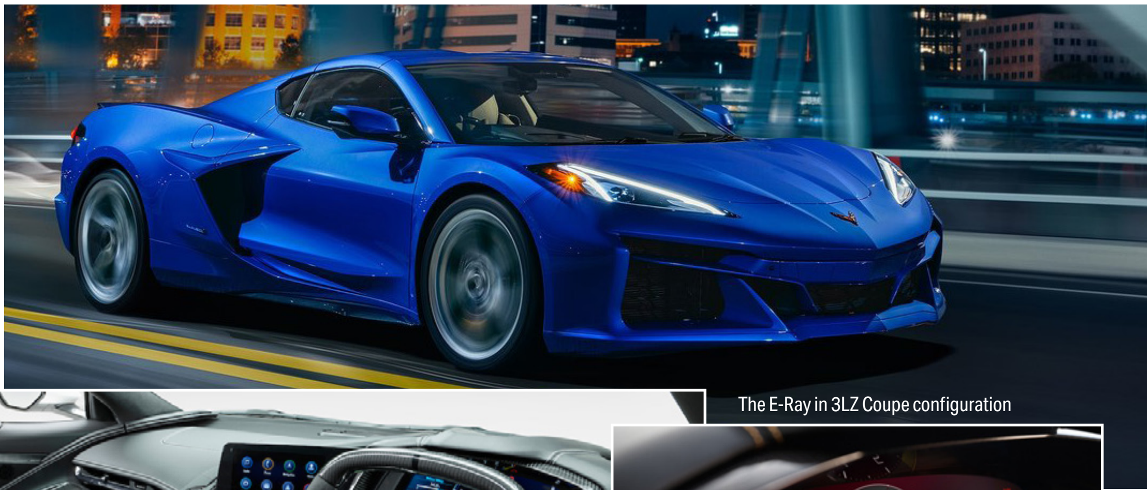
Brand electrifies performance

The Chevrolet Corvette has arrived down under with its Stingray, "groundbreaking" hybrid E-Ray and high-performance Z06.

The E-Ray heralds a new era for the brand in that it leverages an advanced powertrain. Its all-wheel-drive (AWD) system works with a LT2 6.2-litre V8 to create 488kW of power and 806Nm of torque.

Offered exclusively in 3LZ coupe configuration, it retains the Stingray's engine but adds a front axle electric-drive unit

While Chevrolet's V8 delivers 369kW of power and 637Nm of torque on its own, the electrified powertrain – and 119kW and 169Nm via a 1.9kWh self-charging lithium-ion battery – lifts output for 0-100kph in 2.9 seconds.


The E-Ray in 3LZ Coupe configuration

The marque says the model isn't an EV or traditional hybrid, but a "fuel-efficient performance vehicle with electrified propulsion" that doesn't need charging.

Broadening the E-Ray's appeal further is "stealth mode". This allows the car to silently run on just electric power for a short distance when selected at start-up.

In New Zealand, the E-Ray is priced from $285,000.

As for the Stingrays, they start at $192,000 for the 2LT coupe with its convertible sibling at $209,500. The Stingray 3LT coupe is $207,000 and the convertible $224,500. The Z06 coupe starts at $346,000.

TECHNICAL TOUR DE FORCE

Based around the C8 Corvette's mid-engine layout for optimal weight distribution, the E-Ray produces 488kW and 806Nm from its small-block V8 and electric motor.

Harnessing these outputs is an eight-speed dual-clutch transmission with automatic or driver-focused manual mode while the electrified AWD system delivers plenty of grip, balance and precision.

The e-AWD's can learn the road surface and apply extra power to the front wheels for spirited driving or in low-grip environments.

Staggered 20 and 21-inch alloys wrapped in Michelin Pilot Sport 4S tyres boost grip, while magnetic ride control offers three suspension settings for comfort and handling.

Standard carbon-ceramic brakes provide optimal performance while there's a taller wicker-bill spoiler for track use.

Six driver-selectable drive modes are available – tour, sport, track, weather, my mode, z-mode and stealth for silent driving for four to six kilometres up to 72kph.

This model shares its wider exterior proportions with the Z06 to deliver a low stance.

Design features include exclusive badging and alloys. Matching body-colour accents, ground effects and available black exhaust tips complete the look.

The E-Ray's eight-way powered driver and passenger seats offer heating and cooling functions.

There's leather or suede on the heated steering wheel and around the instrument panel.

Enhanced driver-assistance technologies, which are shared with all Corvette models from model-year 2024, include forward-collision warning, lane-keep assist and departure warning, automatic high-beam assist and low-speed autonomous emergency braking with pedestrian detection.

Then there's a full colour head-up display, 14-speaker Bose Performance Series audio system, and eight-inch central touchscreen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity. An in-car app, exclusive to the E-Ray, provides key driving data and telematics such as how its high-tech propulsion system is operating.

ENTER THE C8 STINGRAY

Now boasting an upgraded and three-model line-up, the new Corvette has a variant for different needs and driving scenarios.

Kicking off the range in New Zealand and Australia is the Stingray, which is available as a removable roof coupe or hard-top convertible with two trim levels.

It can be purchased as the

The model-year 2025 Corvette Z06 with the performance package and large rear spoiler. The engine bay housing the 475kW 5.5-litre LT6 features carbon-fibre bracing

value-packed 2LT or more equipped 3LT. Both are powered by Chevrolet's 6.2-litre naturally aspirated V8 for 369kW of power and 637Nm of torque.

Power is sent to the rear axle through a fast-shifting eight-speed dual-clutch transmission.

Fresh inclusions for Stingrays include an improved safety offering and soft-close bonnet.

COMPLETING THE RANGE

Designed and engineered as a precision tool for the track, the Corvette Z06 boasts the all-new 5.5-litre LT6, the most powerful naturally aspirated V8 in any production car.

Featuring a flat-plane crank and 8,600rpm limit, there's 475kW and 595Nm on tap for the Z06 to complete the 0-100kph sprint in just three seconds.

A bespoke track-focused suspension tune and larger brakes compared to the Stingray bolster its track credentials, while the bodywork has been revised to increase downforce and powertrain cooling efficiency.

Replaceable spoiler wicker-bills, rear-brake cooling ducts, removable front-fascia panel and front-underwing stall gurneys bolster downforce to keep the Z06 planted around the track.

A performance package is available down under. This offers a larger carbon-fibre rear wing and ground effects, chassis tuning, magnetic ride-control calibration, Michelin Cup 2 R ZPs and Brembo carbon-ceramic brakes.

Aerodynamic improvements lift downforce to 333kg at 300kph, more than any Corvette ever.

Optional single-piece carbon-fibre wheels with five spokes, which have resulted from a five-year collaboration between Carbon Revolution and General Motors' design and engineering teams, save 18.6kg of unsprung, rotational mass. Made in Victoria, they are an option on the Z06 and E-Ray.

SPANNING SEVEN DECADES

The Corvette legend started in late 1951 when GM designer Harley Earl created a top-secret project.

Two years later, the first-generation Corvette – designated the C1 – made its public debut in 1953 at the GM Motorama concept show. Production quickly followed.

Boasting a lightweight fibreglass body, distinctive exterior styling and a six-cylinder Blue Flame engine with 112kW, the C1 was an American take on popular British sports cars of the era.

Two years later, the Corvette was fitted with a V8 for the first time. Producing 145kW and featuring a displacement 4.3-litre, the engine was soon paired with a three-speed manual alongside the previous two-speed automatic.

The now-iconic C2 generation made its debut in 1963. It wasn't only lighter, leaner and faster than the original. It introduced the Stingray nameplate.

Independent rear suspension was included and, by 1966, Chevrolet had added two big-block V8s – a 6.5-litre with 317kW and the 318kW seven-litre, which would eventually make more than 372kW in limited-edition L88 guise.

The C3 followed in 1968 and was one of the longest-serving generations, lasting until 1982. Its design was inspired by the iconic Mako Shark II concept and this generation saw the ZR1 moniker introduced.

The 1984-96 C4 heralded performance improvements.

The ZR1 came into its own with this generation thanks to its dual-overhead camshaft 5.7-litre V8 and electronically adjustable suspension.

Chevrolet's small-block LS engines made their debut with the fifth-generation Corvette from 1997 to 2004, while the 2005-13 C6 cemented the reputation of the flagship Z06 and ZR1 models.

The C7, made from 2014-19, almost saw the marque fulfil its long-held dream of shifting its performance icon from being front-engined.

A new chapter was turned with the eighth-generation model in 2020. After six decades, the C8 had a mid-engined layout for better weight distribution and driving dynamics.

The Stingray comes as a removable roof coupe or hard-top convertible

Red Bull junior dominates

Liam Lawson will be the most recent Formula 1 driver to compete in what was the predecessor to the Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship when he starts his first full season with Red Bull as Max Verstappen's team-mate.

The New Zealand-based series has a proud history of nurturing top talent, including Kiwi Brendon Hartley, Russian Daniil Kvyat, Brit Callum Ilott, Jehan Daruvala from India, Brazilian Igor Fraga and Japan's Yuki Tsunoda.

All of them progressed from the Toyota Racing Series into Red Bull's junior driver development programme before enjoying success at the highest level.

Drivers accepted into that junior team are compelled to work hard from the start and have their sights set firmly on the big goal of F1.

They are under permanent pressure to perform and only those who show the talent for a sustainable F1 career are supported.

The next driver likely to take to the grid at the top of the sport in 2026 is Arvid Lindblad, who has been racing here this summer.

The 17-year-old was a late addition to the 17-strong grid of the Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship.

Dr Helmut Marko, Red Bull Racing's chief adviser, instigated Lindblad's entry so the teenager gains more FIA Super Licence points to take part in free practice one (FP1) with the Visa Cash App RB team in F1.


Arvid Lindblad

Lindblad leads Zack Scoular in the Taupo round of the Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship in January this year

The FP1 day usually begins with the first practice session, which allows teams and drivers to familiarise themselves with the track and the set-up of test vehicles as well as gathering data.

Lindblad started 2023 with the UAE F4 series as a warm-up. He then switched to Europe for the competitive Italian F4.

"I wanted to be challenging for the wins every weekend and for the championship at the end of the season, which we did," he says. "I surpassed my expectations with the performance I had, especially at the beginning of the year."

Just 16 years old at the time, the Brit concedes the second half of 2023 wasn't as successful as the first.

"We had a couple of issues that we weren't quite able to get on top of. That was unfortunate because we had a really good start to the year with a good margin in the Italian championship.

"That we unfortunately lost. We had a really poor performance towards the end of the year and struggled a lot."

Lindblad finished the season third in the Italian F4 with six victories and he was fourth in the Euro 4 Championship.

Shrugging off that disappointment, he went to the Macau GP. He dominated F4 by winning qualifying and final race.

"Macau is so raw, not getting re-asphalted like many of the F1 circuits. It keeps the bumps, it's pure, a proper street circuit and I love that. You can feel it, so close to the walls, and I loved it from my first laps."

Macau and New Zealand are the only races outside of F1 recognised as grand prix events by the sport's governing body

Lindblad went on to win four races in F3 during 2024, which he describes as "a really good year".

He adds: "Being a rookie and being 16 against a much more experienced field, I knew it was going to be really challenging. I was happy with how we prepared and with how the racing went."

Lindblad is now competing with other rising stars on five New Zealand circuits in the Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship.

The series' final round was due to take place at Highlands Motorsport Park, Cromwell – the 69th New Zealand Grand Prix – from February 6-9, just as this issue of Autofile went to press and with Lindblad topping the points table.

"It's my first time in New Zealand so all the tracks are new to me. The championship has been successful with many competitors making it to F1 and it's great preparation for the F2 championship this year."

Interviewed for commentator Jonathan Green's blog on the Talk Motorsport website, Lindblad says the decision to come here was "quite last minute".

"I only found out in mid-December that I was going to be racing here. In consultation with Dr Marko, we agreed coming here was the best way to get the licence points I need."

Although those points are crucial to his career, they don't dominate his thoughts when he grids up. "I want to win, so the points tally isn't front of mind at race time."

In addition to his F1 free-practice opportunities with the VCARB team, Lindblad will again step up to a full F2 season with Campos Racing this year.


Lindblad celebrates after winning race two of the 2024 Formula Regional Middle East Championship

Lindblad back in his karting days

Leitch's 'perfect' start to the year


Brendon Leitch in action at the 24 Hours of Dubai

The youngest member of Invercargill's fastest family, Brendon Leitch, has scored his first win of 2025 at the punishing Michelin 24 Hours of Dubai.

Together with Gerhard Watzinger, Don Yount, Jia Jun Song and Takis Spiliopoulos, he took Leipert Motorsport's Lamborghini Huracan Super Trofeo Evo II to first place in the GTX class, leading from pole to the finish.

The team finished a massive 37 laps ahead of nearest class rivals 111 Racing and came in 33rd overall in the 64-strong field last month.

"This was the perfect way to kick off the year," says Leitch, who began the race.

He kept pace with the GT3 cars briefly before putting two laps on the GTXs inside the first two hours.

From the first handover, it was a case of maintaining the lead. One of the team's drivers, not Leitch, collided with a faster GT3 during the night before stalling soon after sunrise following a spin.

Luckily, the team had established an enormous lead in the early laps and were able to stay in front. The car kept its class lead and finished wearing yards of "race tape" across its nose.

"It was a fun race," says Leitch. "We had great speed and the team did a fantastic job. It was almost perfect if not for a few contacts in the night and a spin in the day. I enjoyed doing another 24-hour race and I'm looking forward to the next one."

The Leitch family is immersed in motorsport. His father Barry met mum Marguerite while they were both racing karts, while Brendon's older brother Damon raced the Toyota Racing Series (TRS) and is now a resident driver at the Highland Park circuit in Cromwell.

Brendon shot into the national motorsport spotlight when he joined Damon in the TRS in 2014, posting top times with second-hand tyres. His last full year in the series, 2019, netted him sixth place overall with one win and three podiums.

From that point, his focus was offshore, moving into GT3, GTX and other premium race categories.

He finished 2024 in top form, taking victories in November at Jerez in Spain and has started 2025 as he means to continue.

Learning lessons from challenge

Rally star Zeal Jones has taken valuable lessons from his experience in the final shootout for the Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC Challenge in Finland.

He fought his way through two rounds of testing in Japan to make the competition's final stages.

However, he fell short of winning one of the top two spots and a place as a Generation 4 driver in Toyota Gazoo's world rally programme.

"I lacked the consistency of those chosen, Kanta Yanaguida and Rio Ogata," says Jones.

"There are so many different areas you're tested on and you can't prepare for everything. It's hard to pinpoint any specifics, but consistency is key."

Despite missing out on the programme, Jones was happy with his efforts given his unfamiliarity with the Japanese conditions.

"In our downtime, I was thinking what else could I have done with my level of experience on the snow, with the cars and in that environment.

"I couldn't have done anything more and I left it all out on the table to display my skill. There will be more opportunities to come."

Jones adds one of the biggest things he learnt from taking part in the contest was patience.

"Coming from a Rally 2 background in 2024, the cars were slower so I had to adjust my aggression to more standard cars with the reduced level of grip and power as well as other significant differences.

"Looking back on my 2024 NZ Rally Championship campaign, I can see where I went wrong and could make up time."


Zeal Jones

Nicolas Caillol, Toyota Gazoo Racing NZ's motorsport manager, says: "We're proud of Zeal's achievement in going up to the final stages of just six drivers from an initial 100. That's impressive regardless of anything else."

Second case involving same vehicle results in rejection of application by latest owner

The case: The buyer wanted to reject her 2011 Audi A4 because it was leaking oil, which suggested a faulty positive crankcase valve. She claimed the car hadn't been repaired properly after the previous owner rejected it. The trader said it had fixed the vehicle prior to purchase and its customer had it for 14 months, so it wasn't liable for its maintenance and repairs.

The decision: The application under the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA) was thrown out.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal, Auckland, via video link.

Background

Belinda King purchased a 2011 Audi A4 with 67,921km on the odometer from Infinity Auto Import Ltd in Auckland on February 15, 2023, for $15,990. She wanted to reject it because of a pre-existing excessive oil-consumption issue.

The Audi had previously been before the tribunal when the prior owner obtained an order for rejection because the timing chain had slipped causing engine damage.

King claimed the trader didn't adequately repair the car. The dealer said any issues with it were new faults, and it was too late for King to raise ongoing issues given its age, price and mileage.

The case

Eight months after purchase, the vehicle's oil-warning light came on. King put a litre of oil into the engine and kept driving it.

On November 5, 2023, she said the same light came on again and she added more oil. It illuminated on December 23 and King noticed oil patches underneath it from September.

On January 12, 2024, she put in five litres of oil and replaced the filter. King checked its level on February 2 and it was only one-quarter from the bottom.

On February 23, she saw the oil level on the dashboard was empty so she added four litres.

The next month, King discovered the Audi's previous owner had brought a claim against the trader about the car.

In a decision dated January 18, 2023, the tribunal had allowed its rejection.

It found the vehicle failed the CGA's guarantee of acceptable quality because the timing chain had slipped. The tribunal recorded both parties agreed the engine was damaged and required reconditioning, so the Audi went back to the trader.

King's claim was the car wasn't properly fixed before being sold to her, so she arranged for Spargs Autotune to inspect it on March 25, which confirmed it was consuming too much oil.

She suspected the issue might have arisen out of previous repairs so she wanted to reject the Audi, which she left with the dealer for assessment.

King dealt with the trader's director, Peter Li. According to her, he said the Audi had a leak but he wasn't prepared to take the vehicle back.

She had Vodis Automotive assess the car. Its report dated April 29 included oil was leaking over the transmission, coolant was coming out of the water-pump area and there were signs of the positive crankcase valve (PCV) leaking.

It estimated $4,000 for repairs and noted the Audi had travelled 80,961km.

After King's application was filed, the tribunal requested her to have a consumption test performed so she returned the car to Vodis on July 19. It found the oil was overfilled. It drained the excess and the odometer was on 81,374km.

Li said the issues identified in the tribunal's prior decision had been fixed. He provided an invoice dated February 13, 2023, that noted the trader had reconditioned the engine, and replaced the timing chain, tensioner, inlet valves, valve guides, pistons and rings.

The dealer added the current fault was unrelated to the previous rejection and, given King's ownership and the vehicle's mileage, the trader had no further responsibility.

The tribunal said it was important to establish what the odometer was on when it began showing signs of any fault. After the hearing, King produced a photo taken on November 22 last year showing it was on 77,371km.

The finding

The tribunal found the car most likely had a faulty PCV valve. It accepted King's evidence that she first noticed the oil leak about seven months after purchase.

The invoice from Vodis was from April 2024, or about 14-and-a-half months post-purchase. It noted the odometer was on 80,961km. The car had, therefore, been driven 13,000km in that time.

After the hearing, King produced a photo of her 77,371km odometer reading, which she claimed was taken nine months after sale.

The tribunal considered that by mid-September, when the oil-warning light first came on, the mileage was most likely around 75,500km.

A 2011 Audi A4

King cast doubt on Li's evidence, stating the invoice didn't include all the parts needed, but it included reference to a boot-lid spoiler installed for her.

The tribunal found Li to be a reliable witness and accepted his explanation as to the work that had been done.

The best evidence of those repairs was that the leaks hadn't emerged until the odometer read 75,000km. Had there been any failure to fix the car adequately, King would have seen symptoms of that poor repair far earlier.

The key issue was whether its new fault was the trader's responsibility. Under the CGA, a reasonable consumer needs to understand vehicles of this price, age and mileage can develop defects and require maintenance that can be expensive.

The tribunal noted it wasn't until King learned of its prior decision that she sought to involve the dealer even though there was evidence of the fault back in September 2023.

The adjudicator observed that even if she had been able to establish the problem was a failure of the CGA's guarantee of acceptable quality, rejection would have been highly unlikely given her delay in bringing the problem to the attention of the trader.

Order

The application was dismissed.

Performance of battery system in electric car waned 'rapidly with dramatic loss of range'

A model-year 2011 Nissan Leaf

The case: The consumer wanted to reject his low-mileage Nissan Leaf because its battery failed within seven months of the car being supplied. He claimed the trader had failed to repair it within a reasonable time frame. The dealer said it was still prepared to remedy the problem.

The decision: The tribunal upheld the rejection of the vehicle. The trader was ordered to pay the buyer $13,494 within 10 working days of the date of the adjudicator's decision.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal, via video link.

Background

Michel Bloom purchased a 2011 Nissan Leaf from Quay Cars 2008 Ltd for $13,494 on August 18, 2023.

Its odometer read 13,204km at the time of sale and it was on 18,078km when the buyer filed his application with the tribunal.

About seven months after purchase, the consumer claimed the Leaf's battery failed and required repair or replacement.

Despite the trader being given many opportunities to remedy the situation, it failed to do so. The buyer said he'd had enough and gave notice to the dealer that he wanted to reject the Leaf.

However, the trader resisted the consumer's right to reject the Nissan. It said that it remained prepared to fix the Leaf by replacing the battery.

The case

The tribunal had to consider if the vehicle had been of acceptable quality for the purposes of the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA) when it was sold.

Section six of this legislation provides that when goods are supplied to a consumer there is a guarantee they are of acceptable quality.

Whether a car is of acceptable quality is considered from the point of view of a reasonable person fully acquainted with its state and condition including any hidden defects.

In this case, there was no dispute between the parties that the Leaf's battery needed to be repaired or replaced.

The battery was advertised as having a 79.6 per cent state of health when it was supplied, but its performance deteriorated rapidly during March 2024 with a dramatic loss of range.

Initial testing suggested it had two faulty cells. The trader agreed to investigate fixing or replacing it.

The finding

The tribunal's independent assessor advised the hearing that battery failure at such a low kilometre range – in this case the Leaf had travelled less than 20,000km – confirmed there was something seriously amiss and that it required repair or, more likely, replacement.

The adjudicator agreed with the assessor, who was appointed to that role by the Minister of Commerce and Consumer Affairs under section 88 of the Motor Vehicle Sales Act, having regard to his personal attributes, qualifications and skills and knowledge of – or experience in – different aspects of matters likely to come before the tribunal.

It was ruled that the battery failed to meet the CGA's statutory guarantee of acceptable quality because it wasn't as durable as a reasonable buyer would expect of a car of that price, age and low mileage.

The tribunal also had to consider if the trader had refused or failed to rectify the Leaf's battery defects within a reasonable time.

Section 18 of the CGA enables a consumer to reject goods when a supplier has been required to remedy a failure but has refused, failed or hasn't succeeded in doing so within a reasonable time.

During the hearing, the buyer produced a 10-page brief of evidence setting out in careful chronological order his dealings with Quay Cars.

He had raised the battery's poor performance with the dealer on April 5, 2024. His brief set out his continued contact with the trader, and their respective efforts to diagnose and repair the battery.

However, by the end of May, nothing had been done to resolve the issue, so the buyer gave notice to the trader by text message that he was rejecting the Leaf.

Despite this rejection, discussions between both parties continued about its battery repair until mid-June.

In frustration, the purchaser hand-delivered a letter of rejection to Quay Cars on June 18 last year.

This stated his reason for rejection was the trader's failure to diagnose or repair the vehicle despite having had it in its possession since April 1, 2024.

The trader explained the circumstances and reasons for the delay to the tribunal. However, some of those details were personal and the adjudicator ruled they were not to be included in the written public decision.

The dealer explained he had delegated responsibility to arrange the repairs to others, including the buyer to some extent. Despite this, a proper diagnosis and repair wasn't forthcoming. The tribunal was satisfied that by June 18, 2024, the purchaser was entitled to reject the Leaf.

In this case, under section 18 of the CGA, the trader hadn't refused to repair the car. Instead, it had failed to repair it within a reasonable period having regard to all the circumstances in this case.

That led to the third issue the tribunal had to consider, which was the remedy available to the buyer under the CGA and that was a full refund of the purchase price.

The consumer paid $13,494 for the Leaf, which he part-funded by way of a trade-in. There was no evidence as to whether the trader had sold the trade-in or not, so the adjudicator ordered the dealer to refund the buyer in cash.

Order

The dealer had to pay the purchaser $13,494 within 10 working days of the tribunal's decision.

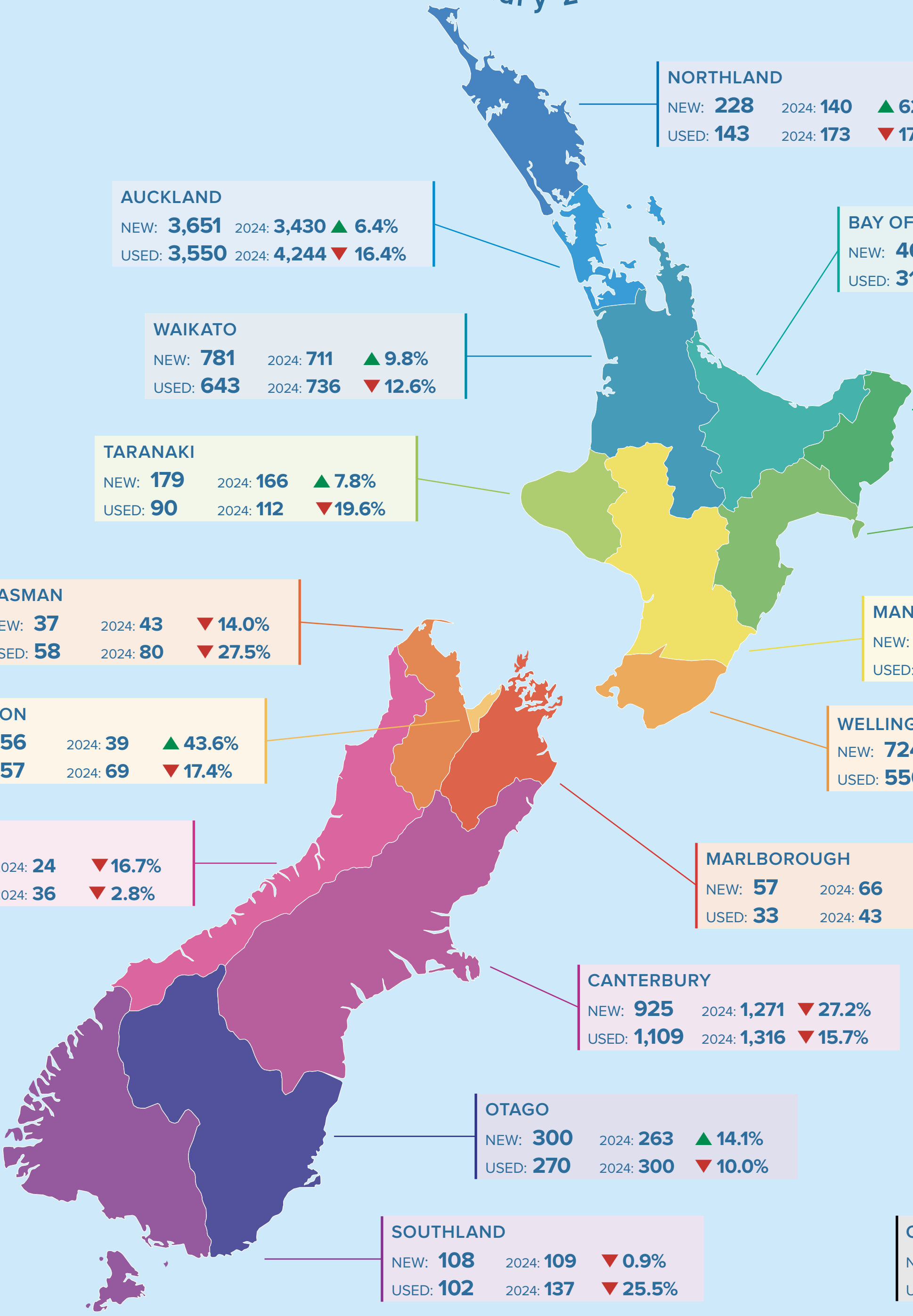
No further orders were made because it was understood the vehicle was already with the trader or its agents.

However, the adjudicator noted if that situation was incorrect and the car was still with the buyer, then the purchaser was to make it available for uplift upon receipt of payment as ordered.

Around the Country
January 2025

Total new cars
8,059
2024: 8,096 ▼ 0.5 %

Total imported used cars
7,381
2024: 8,900 ▼ 17.1%



NORTHLAND
NEW: 228 2024: 140 ▲ 62.9%
USED: 143 2024: 173 ▼ 17.3%

AUCKLAND
NEW: 3,651 2024: 3,430 ▲ 6.4%
USED: 3,550 2024: 4,244 ▼ 16.4%

BAY OF PLENTY
NEW: 462 2024: 467 ▼ 1.1%
USED: 312 2024: 416 ▼ 25.0%

WAIKATO
NEW: 781 2024: 711 ▲ 9.8%
USED: 643 2024: 736 ▼ 12.6%

GISBORNE
NEW: 23 2024: 48 ▼ 52.1%
USED: 61 2024: 113 ▼ 46.0%

TARANAKI
NEW: 179 2024: 166 ▲ 7.8%
USED: 90 2024: 112 ▼ 19.6%

HAWKE'S BAY
NEW: 218 2024: 231 ▼ 5.6%
USED: 136 2024: 223 ▼ 39.0%

TASMAN
NEW: 37 2024: 43 ▼ 14.0%
USED: 58 2024: 80 ▼ 27.5%

MANAWATU-WHANGANUI
NEW: 277 2024: 316 ▼ 12.3%
USED: 214 2024: 253 ▼ 15.4%

NELSON
NEW: 56 2024: 39 ▲ 43.6%
USED: 57 2024: 69 ▼ 17.4%

WELLINGTON
NEW: 724 2024: 755 ▼ 4.1%
USED: 550 2024: 609 ▼ 9.7%

WEST COAST
NEW: 20 2024: 24 ▼ 16.7%
USED: 35 2024: 36 ▼ 2.8%

MARLBOROUGH
NEW: 57 2024: 66 ▼ 13.6%
USED: 33 2024: 43 ▼ 23.3%

CANTERBURY
NEW: 925 2024: 1,271 ▼ 27.2%
USED: 1,109 2024: 1,316 ▼ 15.7%

OTAGO
NEW: 300 2024: 263 ▲ 14.1%
USED: 270 2024: 300 ▼ 10.0%

SOUTHLAND
NEW: 108 2024: 109 ▼ 0.9%
USED: 102 2024: 137 ▼ 25.5%

OTHERS (Chatham Islands, overseas, unknown)
NEW: 13 2024: 17 ▼ 23.5%
USED: 18 2024: 40 ▼ 55.0%

Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - January 2025

MAKE	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/-%	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	2,652	3,308	-19.8	35.9%	2,652	35.9%
Nissan	973	1,275	-23.7	13.2%	973	13.2%
Mazda	903	1,329	-32.1	12.2%	903	12.2%
Honda	762	658	15.8	10.3%	762	10.3%
Subaru	762	653	16.7	10.3%	762	10.3%
BMW	245	218	12.4	3.3%	245	3.3%
Suzuki	213	253	-15.8	2.9%	213	2.9%
Mercedes-Benz	162	154	5.2	2.2%	162	2.2%
Mitsubishi	150	239	-37.2	2.0%	150	2.0%
Audi	142	178	-20.2	1.9%	142	1.9%
Lexus	111	167	-33.5	1.5%	111	1.5%
Volkswagen	104	205	-49.3	1.4%	104	1.4%
Land Rover	42	39	7.7	0.6%	42	0.6%
Ford	22	37	-40.5	0.3%	22	0.3%
Tesla	18	5	260.0	0.2%	18	0.2%
Jeep	17	24	-29.2	0.2%	17	0.2%
Jaguar	15	12	25.0	0.2%	15	0.2%
Volvo	15	19	-21.1	0.2%	15	0.2%
Mini	10	12	-16.7	0.1%	10	0.1%
Porsche	9	19	-52.6	0.1%	9	0.1%
Peugeot	7	5	40.0	0.1%	7	0.1%
Chevrolet	6	8	-25.0	0.1%	6	0.1%
Dodge	4	7	-42.9	0.1%	4	0.1%
Hyundai	4	7	-42.9	0.1%	4	0.1%
Kia	4	6	-33.3	0.1%	4	0.1%
Fiat	3	6	-50.0	0.0%	3	0.0%
Renault	3	0	300.0	0.0%	3	0.0%
Buick	2	0	200.0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Chrysler	2	7	-71.4	0.0%	2	0.0%
Daihatsu	2	3	-33.3	0.0%	2	0.0%
Holden	2	6	-66.7	0.0%	2	0.0%
Range Rover	2	0	200.0	0.0%	2	0.0%
Austin	1	1	0.0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Austin-Healey	1	0	100.0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Bugatti	1	0	100.0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Others	10	40	-75.0	0.1%	10	0.1%
Total	**7,381**	**8,900**	**-17.1**	**100.0%**	**7,381**	**100.0%**

Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - January 2025

MAKE	MODEL	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/-%	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Aqua	695	870	-20.1	9.4%	695	9.4%
Toyota	Prius	462	650	-28.9	6.3%	462	6.3%
Toyota	Corolla	359	329	9.1	4.9%	359	4.9%
Honda	Fit	306	303	1.0	4.1%	306	4.1%
Mazda	Axela	265	443	-40.2	3.6%	265	3.6%
Subaru	Impreza	263	302	-12.9	3.6%	263	3.6%
Nissan	Note	229	383	-40.2	3.1%	229	3.1%
Nissan	X-Trail	228	299	-23.7	3.1%	228	3.1%
Subaru	XV	202	178	13.5	2.7%	202	2.7%
Mazda	Demio	198	289	-31.5	2.7%	198	2.7%
Toyota	C-HR	197	222	-11.3	2.7%	197	2.7%
Suzuki	Swift	172	170	1.2	2.3%	172	2.3%
Mazda	CX-5	167	236	-29.2	2.3%	167	2.3%
Nissan	Serena	148	291	-49.1	2.0%	148	2.0%
Honda	Vezel	140	123	13.8	1.9%	140	1.9%
Nissan	Leaf	110	34	223.5	1.5%	110	1.5%
Toyota	Vellfire	103	80	28.8	1.4%	103	1.4%
Toyota	Vitz	91	184	-50.5	1.2%	91	1.2%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	87	135	-35.6	1.2%	87	1.2%
Subaru	Legacy	86	51	68.6	1.2%	86	1.2%
Mazda	Atenza	75	93	-19.4	1.0%	75	1.0%
Mazda	Premacy	68	110	-38.2	0.9%	68	0.9%
Subaru	Forester	68	42	61.9	0.9%	68	0.9%
Honda	Odyssey	64	27	137.0	0.9%	64	0.9%
Toyota	Spade	63	97	-35.1	0.9%	63	0.9%
Volkswagen	Golf	63	135	-53.3	0.9%	63	0.9%
Toyota	Camry	62	94	-34.0	0.8%	62	0.8%
Toyota	Alphard	60	46	30.4	0.8%	60	0.8%
Audi	A4	55	31	77.4	0.7%	55	0.7%
Toyota	Yaris	49	26	88.5	0.7%	49	0.7%
Honda	Accord	47	29	62.1	0.6%	47	0.6%
Subaru	Outback	47	30	56.7	0.6%	47	0.6%
Honda	CR-V	45	27	66.7	0.6%	45	0.6%
Toyota	Auris	45	75	-40.0	0.6%	45	0.6%
Mazda	CX-3	43	45	-4.4	0.6%	43	0.6%
Others		2,019	2,421	-16.6	27.4%	2,019	27.4%
Total		**7,381**	**8,900**	**-17.1**	**100.0%**	**7,381**	**100.0%**

Business grows despite downturn

Turners Automotive Group posted record net profit before tax of $26.9 million for the six months to the end of September, despite the challenging market and economic downturn.

That total was up by five per cent from $25.7m on the same period of 2023 with the company revealing segment profits for its divisions.

Finance climbed by 59 per cent compared $8.1m year on year, insurance was up eight per cent to $7.7m and credit management rose by two per cent to $1.8m.

Those increases offset an 18 per cent decline in automotive retail, which reported a profit of $14.7m.

A downturn in consumer sentiment put pressure on vehicle prices and cut margins during the six months, but the market has been showing signs of recovery.

Over the half-year, Turners' buy-now sales were up by nine per cent to about 11,050 units and wholesale auction units increased three per cent to around 10,050. Overall margin on owned stock dropped by 28 per cent.

Consumer lending was up and commercial lending down as company policy tightened to focus on cars, vans and utes, and moved away from trucks and machinery lending.

Turners' update for 2024/25's third quarter includes car prices and margins strengthening.

When it comes to finance, arrears are performing well with benefits for originations from the official cash rate easing to follow. Insurance claims have been tracking below expectations with policy sales holding up well.

As for credit management, corporate debt load is recovering slower than expected, but it is increasing quickly for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Looking ahead, opportunities to increase the company's branch network exist and current expansion is progressing well.

Numbers fall

Sales of used-imported cars came in at 7,381 last month for a drop of 17.1 per cent compared to 8,900 in January 2024. The top marque was Toyota on 2,652 units with Nissan second on 973. January's best-selling model was Toyota's Aqua with 695 units. Next up were the Prius on 462, Corolla with 359, Honda's Fit on 306 and the Mazda Axela on 265.

Todd Hunter, chief executive officer, says Turners' strong result for the half-year overall shows its diversified business model is proving to be effective.

He adds: "One of the deepest downturns in retail required us to reduce used-car prices to meet the market.

"The agility and resilience of the business showed through with the natural stabilisers of our finance and insurance offsetting the pressure on auto retail.

"This result reflects not only the effectiveness of our diversified model, but also the quality and skill of our team, which responded in an agile fashion to market conditions to ensure that, while margins were squeezed in retail, volumes were slightly up."

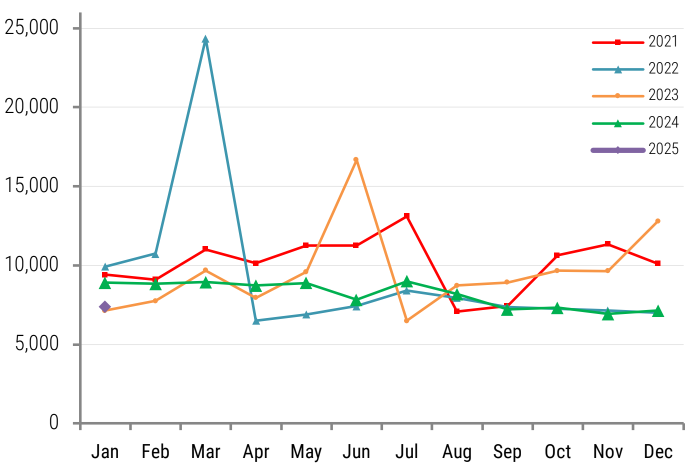
Half-year earnings per share were 21.8 cents and the board declared a dividend of 7c per share for the second quarter.

Chairman Grant Baker says: "Growing profit in this environment is a considerable achievement.

"Turners has demonstrated it can improve returns to shareholders over time thanks to its diversified business model that offers upside in downturns as well as periods of economic expansion.

"We've more than doubled dividends over the past decade, continuously striving for record results as well as continuing to invest for future growth."

Used Imported Passenger Registrations - 2021–2025



Used Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Motive Power - January 2025

MAKE	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/-%	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	140	44	218.2%	1.9%	140	1.9%
Plug-in hybrid electric	62	105	-41.0%	0.8%	62	0.8%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	3,212	3,882	-17.3%	43.5%	3,212	43.5%
Petrol	3,843	4,746	-19.0%	52.1%	3,843	52.1%
Diesel	124	123	0.8%	1.7%	124	1.7%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	**7,381**	**8,900**	**-17.1%**		**7,381**	

Port backed by environment court

Port of Tauranga has received a second interim decision confirming that resource consent will be granted for stage one of its planned berth extension at Sulphur Point.

The Environment Court's ruling requires some amendments to conditions proposed by the company and follows a three-week hearing, which took place in March 2023.

Next up was an interim decision released about a year ago requiring the port to undertake extra engagement with Bay of Plenty Regional Council and local iwi.

Stage one of the project involves the construction of 285 metres of extra berth to the south of the Tauranga's existing container berths, a small amount of reclamation behind the new wharf and associated dredging.

Chief executive Leonard Sampson has welcomed the second interim decision in the wake of extensive follow-up work undertaken by the port in line with a request from the Environment Court.

It has now been determined that, "from a western science perspective", the physical effects of what's being proposed by the company are expected to be minor in the short term and negligible in the long term.

"The extension is urgently required national infrastructure and we're keen to move as quickly as possible," explains Sampson.

"To that end, we will evaluate the court's decision and assess our options in relation to impending fast-track legislation."

The stage-one extension is part of the port's proposed Stella Passage development, which includes the second stage of the Sulphur Point extension and works at the Mount Maunganui wharves.

The whole development has been listed in the fast-track approvals legislation currently before parliament.

GERMANY JOINT FOURTH

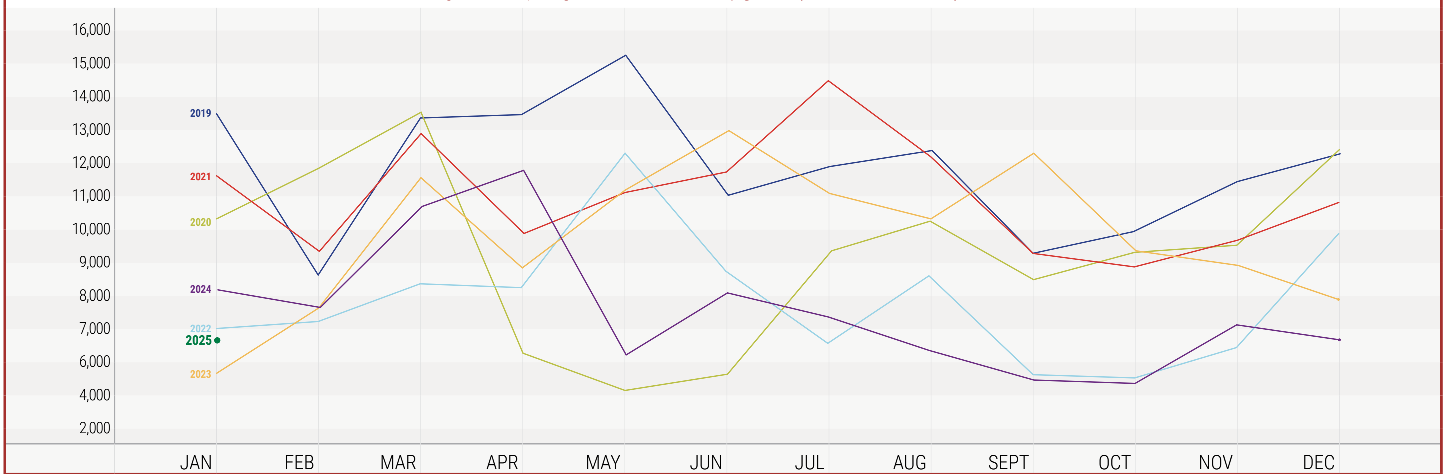
There were 6,679 used passenger vehicles imported into New Zealand during January.

That was up by 29 units when compared to 6,650 crossing the border in December.

Last month's total included 6,484 used cars coming in from Japan for a market share of 97.1 per cent.

There were also 88 arrivals from Australia, 39 from the US, 21 from Germany and Singapore, and 18 from the UK.

USED IMPORTED PASSENGER VEHICLE ARRIVALS



Used Imported Passenger Vehicles By Country Of Export

COUNTRY OF EXPORT	2025			2024						2023	
	JAN '25	JAN MARKET SHARE %	2025 TOTAL	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2024 TOTAL	MRKT SHARE	2023 TOTAL	MRKT SHARE
Australia	88	1.3%	**88**	279	357	302	347	1,285	1.5%	1,263	1.1%
Great Britain	18	0.3%	**18**	56	49	54	96	255	0.3%	272	0.2%
Japan	6,484	97.1%	**6,484**	25,429	24,909	17,868	17,834	86,040	97.5%	113,462	98.0%
Singapore	21	0.3%	**21**	89	62	53	52	256	0.3%	250	0.2%
USA	39	0.6%	**39**	44	58	75	72	249	0.3%	265	0.2%
Other countries	29	0.4%	**29**	30	61	25	54	170	0.2%	241	0.2%
Total	**6,679**	**100.0%**	**6,679**	**25,927**	**25,496**	**18,377**	**18,455**	**88,255**	**100.0%**	**115,753**	**100.0%**

Boost for company's ratings

Provident Insurance's rating for financial strength has been upgraded by AM Best to B+ (good) from B (fair).

In addition, the Auckland-based business' long-term issuer credit rating has improved to bbb (good) from bb+ (fair).

This reflects Provident's balance sheet strength is considered by AM Best as "adequate", with that assessment also applying to its operating performance, limited business profile and appropriate enterprise risk management (ERM).

The rating upgrades reflect sustained improvement in the company's risk-adjusted capitalisation over recent periods and it was at the very strong level when its 2024 financial year ended.

As for the future, AM Best expects Provident's capitalisation to remain at least strong over the medium term, supported by its internal capital generation.

Other positive balance-sheet strength factors include conservative investment strategy and a robust regulatory solvency position.

"An offsetting balance-sheet strength factor includes exposure to long-duration policies that increases reserving risk," reports AM Best. However, Provident takes a "prudent reserving approach and has a history of reserve adequacy".

The business' operating performance is viewed as adequate, and it continues to be supported by its positive underwriting and robust investment returns.

It recorded a return-on-equity ratio of 15.2 per cent and a combined ratio of 96.9 per cent in 2023/24.

Provident has made "significant" recent investments in its information technology and pricing capabilities to support its next phase of accelerated growth.

AM Best assesses its business profile as limited. This reflects its relatively modest scale of operations and limited geographical diversification, as with all business emanating from New Zealand.

Provident's ERM has been classed as "appropriate" given the size and complexity of its operations.

INCREASE IN TRADE

Dealers sold 16,111 second-hand cars to the public last month for a rise of 12.3 per cent from 14,344 in January last year.

Trade-ins totalled 13,398, an 8.8 per cent jump from 12,312, and there were 40,761 private transactions, down by 5.1 per cent.

SECONDHAND CAR SALES - January 2025

	DEALER TO PUBLIC				PUBLIC TO PUBLIC			PUBLIC TO DEALER		
REGION	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/- %	MARKET SHARE	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/- %	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/- %
Northland	502	483	3.9%	3.1%	1,910	2,021	-5.5%	175	182	-3.8%
Auckland	5,205	4,789	8.7%	32.3%	13,206	14,233	-7.2%	5,857	5,058	15.8%
Waikato	1,734	1,390	24.7%	10.8%	3,954	4,153	-4.8%	1,110	1,106	0.4%
Bay of Plenty	1,039	932	11.5%	6.4%	2,865	2,970	-3.5%	638	653	-2.3%
Gisborne	134	127	5.5%	0.8%	395	429	-7.9%	43	63	-31.7%
Hawke's Bay	682	537	27.0%	4.2%	1,512	1,552	-2.6%	448	385	16.4%
Taranaki	388	329	17.9%	2.4%	1,036	1,132	-8.5%	212	193	9.8%
Manawatu-Whanganui	892	715	24.8%	5.5%	2,152	2,244	-4.1%	695	704	-1.3%
Wellington	1,573	1,411	11.5%	9.8%	3,238	3,382	-4.3%	1,094	1,056	3.6%
Tasman	131	126	4.0%	0.8%	532	496	7.3%	20	13	53.8%
Nelson	145	108	34.3%	0.9%	410	443	-7.4%	174	153	13.7%
Marlborough	132	135	-2.2%	0.8%	346	457	-24.3%	65	79	-17.7%
West Coast	109	103	5.8%	0.7%	321	319	0.6%	44	56	-21.4%
Canterbury	2,335	2,103	11.0%	14.5%	5,628	5,708	-1.4%	2,185	2,039	7.2%
Otago	755	691	9.3%	4.7%	2,179	2,174	0.2%	468	429	9.1%
Southland	309	297	4.0%	1.9%	961	1,074	-10.5%	170	143	18.9%
Other	46	68	-32.4%	0.3%	116	158	-26.6%	0	0	0.0%
NZ Total	**16,111**	**14,344**	**12.3%**	**100.0%**	**40,761**	**42,945**	**-5.1%**	**13,398**	**12,312**	**8.8%**

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - January 2025

MAKE	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/-%	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	1,691	1,627	3.9	21.0%	1,691	21.0%
Kia	858	827	3.7	10.6%	858	10.6%
Mitsubishi	665	1,142	-41.8	8.3%	665	8.3%
Suzuki	506	535	-5.4	6.3%	506	6.3%
Ford	375	442	-15.2	4.7%	375	4.7%
Mazda	331	318	4.1	4.1%	331	4.1%
GWM	322	296	8.8	4.0%	322	4.0%
MG	321	195	64.6	4.0%	321	4.0%
Honda	309	344	-10.2	3.8%	309	3.8%
Hyundai	269	291	-7.6	3.3%	269	3.3%
Nissan	238	368	-35.3	3.0%	238	3.0%
Subaru	228	219	4.1	2.8%	228	2.8%
Volkswagen	208	207	0.5	2.6%	208	2.6%
BMW	200	160	25.0	2.5%	200	2.5%
BYD	169	39	333.3	2.1%	169	2.1%
Land Rover	113	107	5.6	1.4%	113	1.4%
Lexus	106	111	-4.5	1.3%	106	1.3%
Mercedes-Benz	104	118	-11.9	1.3%	104	1.3%
Porsche	100	95	5.3	1.2%	100	1.2%
Peugeot	95	56	69.6	1.2%	95	1.2%
Mini	87	52	67.3	1.1%	87	1.1%
Skoda	85	76	11.8	1.1%	85	1.1%
Audi	82	118	-30.5	1.0%	82	1.0%
KGM	74	0	7,400.0	0.9%	74	0.9%
Jaecoo	67	0	6,700.0	0.8%	67	0.8%
Omoda	64	0	6,400.0	0.8%	64	0.8%
Mahindra	59	48	22.9	0.7%	59	0.7%
Jaguar	43	15	186.7	0.5%	43	0.5%
Polestar	38	1	3,700.0	0.5%	38	0.5%
Volvo	38	33	15.2	0.5%	38	0.5%
Tesla	34	27	25.9	0.4%	34	0.4%
Isuzu	33	25	32.0	0.4%	33	0.4%
Jeep	31	17	82.4	0.4%	31	0.4%
Cupra	24	40	-40.0	0.3%	24	0.3%
Aston Martin	13	1	1,200.0	0.2%	13	0.2%
Fiat	10	5	100.0	0.1%	10	0.1%
Opel	9	3	200.0	0.1%	9	0.1%
Citroen	8	11	-27.3	0.1%	8	0.1%
Maserati	8	9	-11.1	0.1%	8	0.1%
Alfa Romeo	7	3	133.3	0.1%	7	0.1%
Lamborghini	7	5	40.0	0.1%	7	0.1%
Bentley	6	4	50.0	0.1%	6	0.1%
Ineos	4	9	-55.6	0.0%	4	0.0%
McLaren	4	1	300.0	0.0%	4	0.0%
Others	16	96	-83.3	0.2%	16	0.2%
Total	**8,059**	**8,096**	**-0.5**	**100.0%**	**8,059**	**100.0%**

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - January 2025

MAKE	MODEL	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/-%	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	RAV4	1,023	618	65.5	12.7%	1,023	12.7%
Kia	Seltos	362	310	16.8	4.5%	362	4.5%
Mitsubishi	ASX	324	438	-26.0	4.0%	324	4.0%
Suzuki	Swift	249	281	-11.4	3.1%	249	3.1%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	215	429	-49.9	2.7%	215	2.7%
Ford	Everest	197	303	-35.0	2.4%	197	2.4%
Kia	Stonic	173	235	-26.4	2.1%	173	2.1%
MG	ZS	164	129	27.1	2.0%	164	2.0%
Toyota	Land Cruiser Prado	159	21	657.1	2.0%	159	2.0%
GWM	Haval H6	144	125	15.2	1.8%	144	1.8%
Kia	Sportage	143	108	32.4	1.8%	143	1.8%
Subaru	Outback	132	71	85.9	1.6%	132	1.6%
Toyota	Corolla Cross	122	242	-49.6	1.5%	122	1.5%
Nissan	X-Trail	117	134	-12.7	1.5%	117	1.5%
MG	MG3	113	41	175.6	1.4%	113	1.4%
Mazda	CX-5	111	146	-24.0	1.4%	111	1.4%
Suzuki	Jimny	111	73	52.1	1.4%	111	1.4%
Mitsubishi	Eclipse Cross	101	207	-51.2	1.3%	101	1.3%
Hyundai	Kona	90	82	9.8	1.1%	90	1.1%
Ford	Mustang	87	8	987.5	1.1%	87	1.1%
GWM	Haval Jolion	85	121	-29.8	1.1%	85	1.1%
BYD	Atto 3	84	5	1,580.0	1.0%	84	1.0%
Volkswagen	Tiguan	80	90	-11.1	1.0%	80	1.0%
Hyundai	Santa Fe	78	76	2.6	1.0%	78	1.0%
Nissan	Qashqai	77	217	-64.5	1.0%	77	1.0%
Suzuki	Vitara	77	54	42.6	1.0%	77	1.0%
Honda	CR-V	76	118	-35.6	0.9%	76	0.9%
Honda	ZR-V	76	153	-50.3	0.9%	76	0.9%
Volkswagen	Golf	75	19	294.7	0.9%	75	0.9%
Kia	Sorento	70	50	40.0	0.9%	70	0.9%
Toyota	Corolla	68	125	-45.6	0.8%	68	0.8%
Hyundai	Tucson	67	80	-16.3	0.8%	67	0.8%
Jaecoo	J7	67	0	6,700.0	0.8%	67	0.8%
Toyota	Yaris	66	41	61.0	0.8%	66	0.8%
Toyota	Yaris Cross	65	92	-29.3	0.8%	65	0.8%
KGM	Torres	64	0	6,400.0	0.8%	64	0.8%
Honda	HR-V	63	0	6,300.0	0.8%	63	0.8%
Toyota	C-HR	60	21	185.7	0.7%	60	0.7%
GWM	Tank	57	34	67.6	0.7%	57	0.7%
Toyota	Highlander	57	294	-80.6	0.7%	57	0.7%
BMW	X5	56	30	86.7	0.7%	56	0.7%
Honda	Civic	53	28	89.3	0.7%	53	0.7%
Omoda	C5	51	0	5,100.0	0.6%	51	0.6%
Mahindra	XUV700	50	37	35.1	0.6%	50	0.6%
Porsche	Macan	50	33	51.5	0.6%	50	0.6%
Others		2,250	2,377	-5.3	27.9%	2,250	27.9%
Total		**8,059**	**8,096**	**-0.5**	**100.0%**	**8,059**	**100.0%**

Charging network set to expand

Owners of electric cars can look forward to more on-the-go recharging options when 341 high-speed public DC charge points approved for government funding are rolled out in urban areas.

The charge points, across 168 units and nine operators, are being co-funded through the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.

The new facilities will boost the network's high-speed DC capacity by about 25 per cent.

A total of $15 million in co-funding has been approved for the projects in the urban infill round subject to all contracts being signed. This unlocked almost $37m in private investment.

The charging units are planned for Auckland, Wellington, Waikato, Canterbury, Otago, Hawke's Bay, the Bay of Plenty, Nelson, Whangarei, Taupo, New Plymouth and Gisborne. Projects should be finished by February 2026.

TIME RANKING GAINED

Assurant, which owns Protecta, has made Time World's Best Companies 2024 rankings.

It follows an analysis of top-performing businesses with the criteria covering employee satisfaction, revenue growth and sustainability.

Surveys were conducted in more than 50 countries with data collected from about 170,000 participants.

It included recommendations of companies, and evaluating employers across image, atmosphere, working conditions, salary and equality.

Sustainability was evaluated on environmental, social and governance data based on standardised key performance indicators and targeted research.

"We're proud to be included in Time's ranking once again," says Keith Demmings, Assurant's president. "Our culture continues to set us apart and empowers us as we grow."

BEST IN THE COUNTRY

Ingham Hyundai Hamilton has been named the marque's top dealer for the third time in the past four years.

Dealer principal Greg Renner says taking out the New Zealand title reflects his team's hard work and commitment.

"I'm proud of our staff and appreciative of their ongoing efforts," he adds.

"The award belongs to everyone who contributes to our daily operations.

Greg Renner, of Ingham Hyundai Hamilton

"Our focus has been on ensuring every customer interaction is positive and impactful. This award shows how much we care about making every experience extraordinary."

LUXURY SALES RECORD

Lexus NZ celebrated record annual sales of 1,328 new cars last year, up from 1,022 in 2022.

Andrew Davis, vice-president, says the growth can largely be attributed to its expanding electrified range and investments in dealerships.

"It was an incredible year in our dealer network with some completing new builds or embarking on substantial renovations."

Models to boost marque's line-up in 2025 will include the NX 450h+ Limited, the first plug-in hybrid (PHEV) in the RX range, and limited-edition RX 500h Black Line.

Davis says: "With the PHEV, we continue to reach more Kiwis than ever with our multi-pathway approach and powertrains for everyone."

TRADER NUMBERS DROP

The number of dealers on the motor-vehicle traders' register fell by 23 last month with the total at the end of December coming in at 2,810.

That was the lowest since May 2013, when it stood at 2,815, and was the third consecutive month numbers have dropped after reaching 2,880 in September 2014.

It also meant the latest total was 99 lower than the 2,909 registered traders at the end of December 2023. Dealer numbers have largely been in decline since hitting a high of 3,535 in November 2017.

DEALERSHIPS OPEN

Auto Distributors NZ (ADNZ), owned by Rick Armstrong, has opened Leapmotor franchises in Greenlane, Auckland, Lower Hutt and Christchurch.

They are selling the Chinese-built fully electric C10 SUV with a sticker price of $54,990.

ADNZ plans to expand its network in the first half of this year.

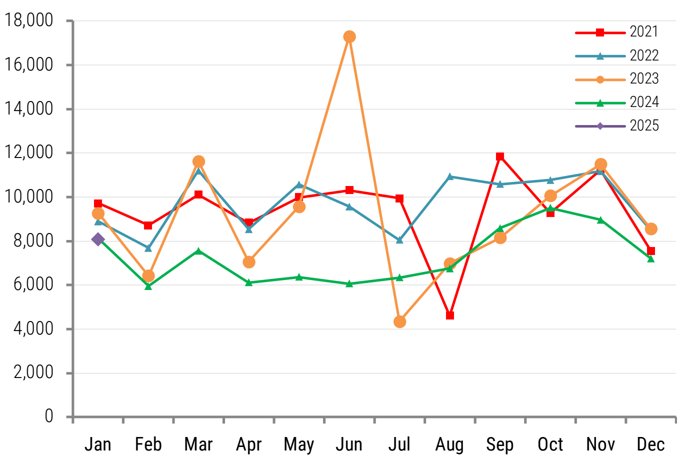
Sales steady

Registrations of new cars came in at 8,059 in January, down by 0.5 per cent compared to 8,096 during the same month of last year.

Toyota was the top marque with 1,691 units. Second spot went to Kia with 858 and Mitsubishi was third on 665.

The Toyota RAV4 was the most popular model on 1,023 units. It was followed by the Kia Seltos on 362 and Mitsubishi's ASX on 324. Suzuki's Swift was fourth on 249 with the Mitsubishi Outlander fifth on 215.

New Passenger Registrations - 2021–2025



New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Motive Power - January 2025

MAKE	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/-%	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	562	243	131.3%	7.0%	562	7.0%
Plug-in hybrid electric	283	202	40.1%	3.5%	283	3.5%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	2,966	2,427	22.2%	36.8%	2,966	36.8%
Petrol	3,677	4,330	-15.1%	45.6%	3,677	45.6%
Diesel	571	894	-36.1%	7.1%	571	7.1%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	**8,059**	**8,096**	**-0.5%**		**8,059**	

'Significant step' for ute segment

The GWM Cannon Alpha has become the first alternative-powered utility to be tested and rated by ANCAP.

Available with hybrid and diesel powertrains, it underwent the full local crash and on-track testing to bolster the list of top-rating options in its segment.

In testing, it displayed similar levels of performance to other dual-cab models assessed against the 2023-25 criteria.

The Cannon Alpha achieved full points for driver protection in the side-impact test and front passenger for frontal offset.

As a large and heavy ute, its overall frontal-offset performance was tempered by its risk to occupants of a struck car with the maximum eight-point vehicle-to-vehicle compatibility penalty applied.

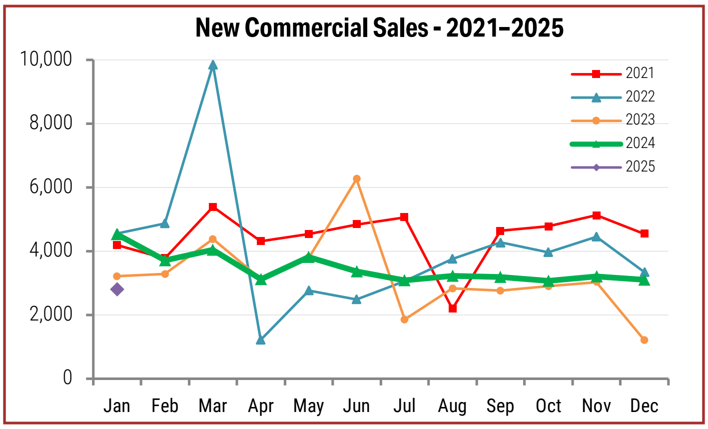
For child-occupant protection, it equalled the top score recorded for this against current criteria to match the 93 per cent notched up by its SUV sibling, the Tank 500.

Full points were awarded for child dummies in head-on and t-bone collision tests.

Technology-wise, the Cannon Alpha scored well thanks to its direct child-protection detection system. This provides the driver with audible and text-based notifications if a child is inadvertently left in the ute.

Its active collision-avoidance capability, which helps to minimise the risk of collision with a pedestrian, cyclist, motorcyclist or another vehicle, scored well. Emergency lane-keeping and braking intervention were rated as good.

ANCAP's chief executive officer, Carla Hoorweg, says: "This rating marks a significant step for this popular segment with the Cannon Alpha being the first hybrid ute ▶



New Commercial Sales by Make - January 2025

MAKE	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/- %	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	765	950	-19.5	27.3%	765	27.3%
Ford	642	1,603	-60.0	22.9%	642	22.9%
Mitsubishi	253	329	-23.1	9.0%	253	9.0%
BYD	194	0	19,400.0	6.9%	194	6.9%
Nissan	169	178	-5.1	6.0%	169	6.0%
Isuzu	127	336	-62.2	4.5%	127	4.5%
Mercedes-Benz	67	62	8.1	2.4%	67	2.4%
LDV	66	71	-7.0	2.4%	66	2.4%
Hino	61	47	29.8	2.2%	61	2.2%
Volkswagen	57	150	-62.0	2.0%	57	2.0%
Fuso	43	50	-14.0	1.5%	43	1.5%
Iveco	39	47	-17.0	1.4%	39	1.4%
Scania	39	65	-40.0	1.4%	39	1.4%
Fiat	31	125	-75.2	1.1%	31	1.1%
Kenworth	29	37	-21.6	1.0%	29	1.0%
Renault	25	27	-7.4	0.9%	25	0.9%
Chevrolet	21	37	-43.2	0.8%	21	0.8%
GWM	21	0	2,100.0	0.8%	21	0.8%
Ram	20	39	-48.7	0.7%	20	0.7%
DAF	17	38	-55.3	0.6%	17	0.6%
Others	113	329	-65.7	4.0%	113	4.0%
Total	**2,799**	**4,520**	**-38.1**	**100.0%**	**2,799**	**100.0%**

New Commercial Sales by Model - January 2025

MAKE	MODEL	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/- %	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Hilux	613	656	-6.6	21.9%	613	21.9%
Ford	Ranger	553	1,471	-62.4	19.8%	553	19.8%
Mitsubishi	Triton	253	329	-23.1	9.0%	253	9.0%
BYD	Shark 6	194	0	19,400.0	6.9%	194	6.9%
Nissan	Navara	169	178	-5.1	6.0%	169	6.0%
Toyota	Hiace	122	254	-52.0	4.4%	122	4.4%
Ford	Transit	89	132	-32.6	3.2%	89	3.2%
Isuzu	D-Max	79	245	-67.8	2.8%	79	2.8%
Mercedes-Benz	Sprinter	55	44	25.0	2.0%	55	2.0%
Volkswagen	Amarok	38	124	-69.4	1.4%	38	1.4%
Fiat	Ducato	31	125	-75.2	1.1%	31	1.1%
Toyota	Land Cruiser	30	40	-25.0	1.1%	30	1.1%
Hino	500	26	15	73.3	0.9%	26	0.9%
LDV	Deliver 9	26	30	-13.3	0.9%	26	0.9%
Hino	300	24	25	-4.0	0.9%	24	0.9%
Iveco	Daily	23	39	-41.0	0.8%	23	0.8%
Isuzu	N Series	23	44	-47.7	0.8%	23	0.8%
GWM	Cannon	21	0	2,100.0	0.8%	21	0.8%
Kenworth	T series	18	21	-14.3	0.6%	18	0.6%
LDV	T60	18	24	-25.0	0.6%	18	0.6%
Others		394	724	-45.6	14.1%	394	14.1%
Total		**2,799**	**4,520**	**-38.1**	**100.0%**	**2,799**	**100.0%**

to achieve five stars. GWM and its vehicle designs have improved markedly over the past decade."

The top rating applies to the two-litre petrol hybrid and 2.4-litre diesel variants.

PROFITS CLIMB BY 93%

Trade Me's parent company posted a net profit of $9.1 million for 2023/24, up by 93 per cent from $4.7m in the previous year.

Titan Parent NZ's performance also marks its continued turnaround after reporting a $2.3m loss in its 2023 financial year.

Revenue in 2023/24 came in at $369.8m, which was up by 3.2 per cent from $358.4m in the prior period.

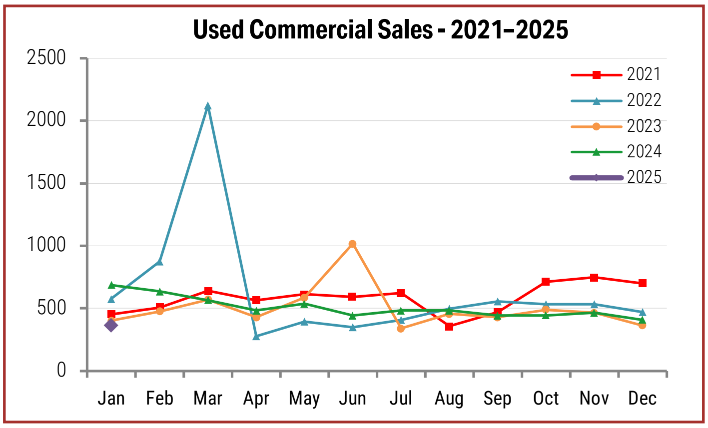
A breakdown of the numbers reveals revenue for Trade Me's holding company included $268.6m from classifieds, up from $247.2m.

This included $125.3m from Trade Me Motors compared to $110.3m, property listings climbing from $85.4m to $110.3m in 2023/24 and its jobs section falling from $51.5m to $36.3m.

Revenue from its marketplace, which is generated from listing, depth and success fees, saw a year-on-year decline from $81.4m to $74.9m. Titan's "other" category under revenue, which includes advertising, dating, payments, general insurance, and life and health insurance comparison netted $26.1m. That was down from the $29.8m achieved in 2022/23.

The report also shows earnings before interest, tax and fair value and foreign-exchange movements rose from $222.3m to $232.2m.

Titan, which is ultimately owned by UK-based private equity company Apax Partners, took control of Trade Me in May 2019.



SHARK INTO TOP FIVE

There were 2,799 new commercial vehicles registered in January, which was down by 38.1 per cent from 4,520 during the same month of 2024.

The total for used-imported commercials was 363 for a drop of 47.3 per cent from 689.

Toyota's Hilux was the best-selling new model with 613 units. Ford's Ranger came second with 553. Mitsubishi's Triton with 253, BYD's Shark 6 on 194 and Nissan's Navara on 169 rounded off the top five.

The used ladder was topped by Toyota's Hiace on 144 units.

Used Commercial Sales by Make - January 2025

MAKE	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/-%	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	175	352	-50.3	48.2%	175	48.2%
Nissan	80	161	-50.3	22.0%	80	22.0%
Ford	19	40	-52.5	5.2%	19	5.2%
Hino	19	36	-47.2	5.2%	19	5.2%
Isuzu	19	26	-26.9	5.2%	19	5.2%
Mitsubishi	14	22	-36.4	3.9%	14	3.9%
Suzuki	10	5	100.0	2.8%	10	2.8%
Mercedes-Benz	4	1	300.0	1.1%	4	1.1%
Volkswagen	4	7	-42.9	1.1%	4	1.1%
Mazda	3	8	-62.5	0.8%	3	0.8%
Chevrolet	2	3	-33.3	0.6%	2	0.6%
Fiat	2	8	-75.0	0.6%	2	0.6%
Holden	2	3	-33.3	0.6%	2	0.6%
DAF	1	0	100.0	0.3%	1	0.3%
Daihatsu	1	7	-85.7	0.3%	1	0.3%
Factory Built	1	0	100.0	0.3%	1	0.3%
Fuso	1	0	100.0	0.3%	1	0.3%
GMC	1	0	100.0	0.3%	1	0.3%
Honda	1	0	100.0	0.3%	1	0.3%
Kenworth	1	1	0.0	0.3%	1	0.3%
Others	3	9	-66.7	0.8%	3	0.8%
Total	**363**	**689**	**-47.3**	**100.0%**	**363**	**100.0%**

Used Commercial Sales by Model - January 2025

MAKE	MODEL	JAN '25	JAN '24	+/-%	JAN '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Hiace	144	268	-46.3	39.7%	144	39.7%
Nissan	NV350	25	101	-75.2	6.9%	25	6.9%
Nissan	NV200	23	14	64.3	6.3%	23	6.3%
Nissan	Caravan	20	27	-25.9	5.5%	20	5.5%
Hino	Dutro	16	25	-36.0	4.4%	16	4.4%
Ford	Transit	13	21	-38.1	3.6%	13	3.6%
Isuzu	Elf	12	18	-33.3	3.3%	12	3.3%
Toyota	Regius	11	37	-70.3	3.0%	11	3.0%
Suzuki	Carry	10	4	150.0	2.8%	10	2.8%
Fuso	Canter	9	13	-30.8	2.5%	9	2.5%
Toyota	Toyoace	7	5	40.0	1.9%	7	1.9%
Toyota	Dyna	5	23	-78.3	1.4%	5	1.4%
Toyota	Hilux	5	6	-16.7	1.4%	5	1.4%
Ford	Ranger	4	11	-63.6	1.1%	4	1.1%
Isuzu	Forward	4	5	-20.0	1.1%	4	1.1%
Nissan	Vanette	4	2	100.0	1.1%	4	1.1%
Hino	Ranger	3	7	-57.1	0.8%	3	0.8%
Mercedes-Benz	Sprinter	3	0	300.0	0.8%	3	0.8%
Volkswagen	Amarok	3	4	-25.0	0.8%	3	0.8%
Fiat	Ducato	2	8	-75.0	0.6%	2	0.6%
Others		40	90	-55.6	11.0%	40	11.0%
Total		**363**	**689**	**-47.3**	**100.0%**	**363**	**100.0%**

Marques get onboard with partners

Daily sales dip

New car imports in January came in at 5,862. This was down by 15.6 per cent when compared to 6,949 units in December, but up 41.4 per cent from the 4,154 recorded in the same month last year.

Registrations of 8,059 new passenger vehicles were completed last month, which was 12.1 per cent more than December's total. However, it was down by 0.5 per cent from 8,096 units in January 2024.

The numbers have resulted in the stock of new cars still to be registered falling for a fifth consecutive month, dropping by 2,197 to 69,862. Daily sales, as averaged over the previous 12 months, stand at 239 units per day – down from 299 a year ago.

January's results mean stock at-hand has fallen to 292 days if sales continue at the current rate. In the same month of 2024, it stood at 226 days.

A plethora of new-vehicle distributors have signed or extended sponsorship deals with Kia of New Zealand being the most recent.

The marque is backing the Hurricanes for the next two Super Rugby Pacific seasons with its logo emblazoned across the team's away jerseys.

Todd McDonald, managing director of Kia NZ, says 2025 marks the 10th year of its involvement with the franchise.

"It was an innovative sponsorship when launched because Kia was the first standalone away-jersey sponsor among all Super Rugby franchises.

"From small beginnings, it has grown to become a pivotal association. Both organisations share a future vision of sustainability and innovation."

Avan Lee, the Hurricanes' chief executive officer, adds the partnership is also testament to shared values relating to community support and engagement through rugby.

"It's exciting to represent a champion brand and have it in a prominent position on our away strip," says Lee. "Kia has been backing us since 2016. We're grateful for its ongoing support."

Lexus, meanwhile, is supporting a sport competed on four legs as its principal sponsor.

Vice-president Andrew Davis says: "Hospitality, which is key to an event like Lexus Urban Polo, is a value deeply rooted in Japanese culture. At our marquee, we aim not just to welcome guests but anticipate and fulfil their needs."

Urban polo is contemporary spin on the traditional sport with faster games, simplified rules and shorter chukkas – that's to say, quarters.

It's played on a compact field of 170 metres by 60m with six riders and ponies charging at speeds of up to 40kph.

One-day events return to Hagley Park, Christchurch, on February 15 and Auckland Domain on March 8.

As for a truly global sport, Auckland FC's vehicle partner for its current A-League season is Cupra.

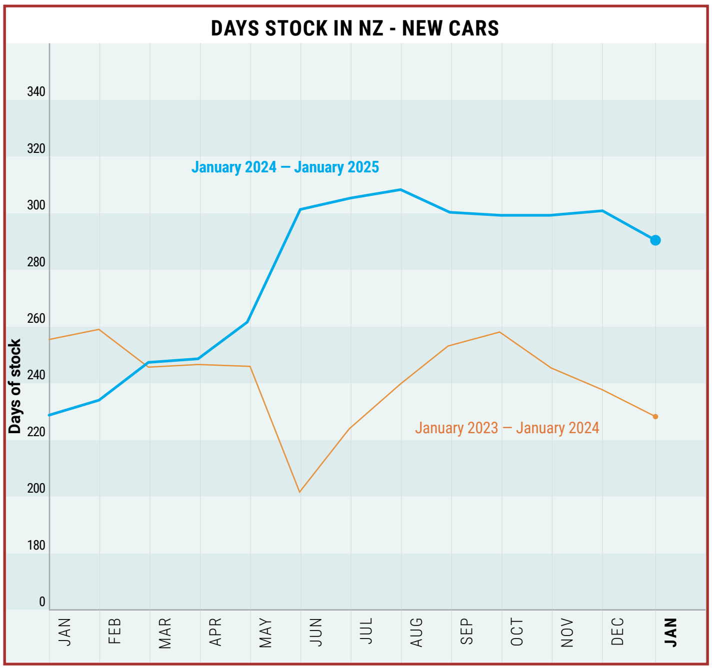
The Volkswagen Group's Spanish brand also partners with FC Barcelona and the Australian women's football team.

Luke Meurant, general manager of Cupra NZ, says the deal highlights the marque's aspirations for its presence in this country.

"Like Auckland FC, we're a young brand experiencing rapid

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
Jan '24	4,154	8,096	-3,942	67,538	299	226
Feb '24	7,608	5,922	1,686	69,224	298	232
Mar '24	8,882	7,538	1,344	70,568	287	246
Apr '24	6,180	6,110	70	70,638	285	248
May '24	7,800	6,350	1,450	72,088	276	261
Jun '24	8,006	6,057	1,949	74,037	245	302
Jul '24	9,313	6,334	2,979	77,016	251	307
Aug '24	7,205	6,750	455	77,471	250	310
Sep '24	6,739	8,579	-1,840	75,631	251	301
Oct '24	8,331	9,489	-1,158	74,473	250	298
Nov '24	6,779	8,954	-2,175	72,298	243	297
Dec '24	6,949	7,188	-239	72,059	239	301
Jan '25	**5,862**	**8,059**	**-2,197**	**69,862**	**239**	**292**
Year to date	5,862	8,059				
Change on last month	-15.6%	12.1%		-3.0%		
Change on Jan 2024	41.1%	-0.5%		3.4%		
	MORE IMPORTED	LESS SOLD		MORE STOCK		



growth and building a legacy of success in New Zealand," he adds. "We're here to challenge the status quo and shake things up."

Nick Becker, Auckland FC's chief executive, explains: "Cupra already works with several high-profile clubs worldwide and understands what it takes for a young, ambitious brand to succeed.

"This agreement is a big deal for us. It demonstrates we're not just here to make up the numbers."

Away from sport and LDV has teamed up with The Morning Shift (TMS), New Zealand's number-one produced podcast.

As part of the deal, all three podcasters – Jordan River, Marc Peard and Brook Ruscoe – are now driving LDV utes.

"As a platform with more than 433,000 followers, TMS connects LDV with our key audiences," says Daile Stephens, head of brand marketing.

"Its authentic, humorous and community-driven content aligns with LDV's promise to help Kiwis to keep working harder every day."

TMS' Marc Peard adds: "We're excited to be partnering with LDV, driving its utes and sharing content around these awesome tools of trade."

Available on weekdays from 6am, TMS has created a "breakfast show-style podcast for the people, by the people".

And, finally, back to sport with Ford NZ blowing the final whistle on its partnership with New Zealand Rugby (NZR) after three decades.

The end of the marque's sponsorship of the sport in this country comes with the two parties being unable to reach a new deal.

In the past, Ford NZ has provided NZR with about 80 vehicles, which were generally turned over every 12 months, for high-profile players and coaches,

The deal extended to national team coaches, the five Super Rugby Pacific head coaches and five NZR-contracted assistants.

While the use of cars was largely a discretionary benefit, some All Blacks have contractual vehicle agreements and, in those cases, compensation or replacements may be required.

"We are proud to have been a sponsor of the All Blacks and NZRU for more than 30 years," says Ford NZ in a statement. "However, the decision has been made to end the partnership.

"We're disappointed in the outcome but want to acknowledge it's been a fantastic experience backing the teams in black over the years. As our way of saying thank you, Ford will support the players through the transition where needed."

The NZR adds: "We've had a fantastic partnership. We extend our thanks to the people at Ford for their support and know they will continue to be some of our biggest fans."

Stock levels fall

There were 6,679 used cars imported last month, an increase of 0.4 per cent from December when 6,650 crossed our borders.

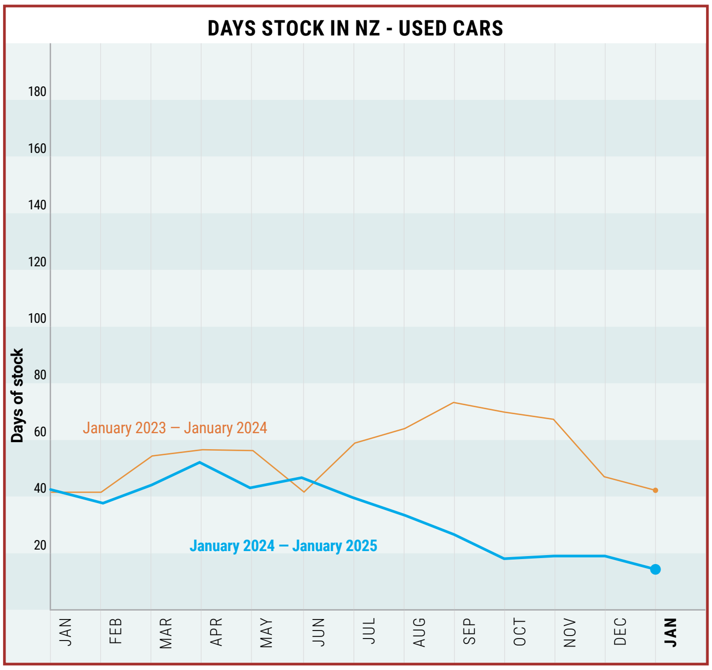
However, the latest figure was down by 17.7 per cent from 8,117 in January 2024.

Some 7,381 units were registered in January, down by 17.1 per cent from 8,900 in the same month of 2024, but up 3.4 per cent from 7,136 registrations in December.

With 702 fewer used cars imported than sold last month – the sixth drop in the past seven months – unregistered stock on dealers' yards or in compliance shops came to 4,257 units.

This was 69.1 per cent lower than the 13,756 units a year ago and down by 14.2 per cent from 4,959 at the end of December.

Average daily registrations for January were 264, compared to 320 a year ago, and there is 16 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
Jan '24	8,117	8,900	-783	13,756	320	43
Feb '24	7,457	8,816	-1,359	12,397	322	38
Mar '24	10,353	8,935	1,418	13,815	320	43
Apr '24	11,551	8,722	2,829	16,644	323	52
May '24	6,070	8,878	-2,808	13,836	321	43
Jun '24	7,875	7,821	54	13,890	297	47
Jul '24	7,176	8,991	-1,815	12,075	303	40
Aug '24	6,156	8,174	-2,018	10,057	302	33
Sep '24	5,045	7,201	-2,156	7,901	297	27
Oct '24	4,714	7,317	-2,603	5,298	291	18
Nov '24	7,062	6,915	147	5,445	283	19
Dec '24	6,650	7,136	-486	4,959	268	19
Jan '25	**6,679**	**7,381**	**-702**	**4,257**	**264**	**16**
Year to date	6,679	7,381				
Change on last month	0.4%	3.4%		-14.2%		
Change on Jan 2024	-17.7%	-17.1%		-69.1%		
	LESS IMPORTED	LESS SOLD		LESS STOCK		

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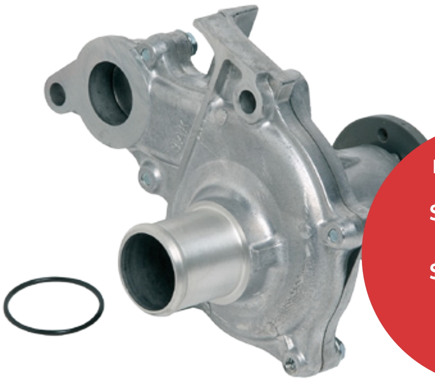

RTP GST Excl.
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