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New regulator flags car credit concerns

Affordability and sustainability of loans still in spotlight despite amendments to legislation

Lenders and car dealers providing finance to consumers have been reminded of key areas a regulator is focusing on months after gaining oversight of the sector.

The Financial Markets Authority (FMA) took over responsibility for compliance with the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act (CCCFA) from the Commerce Commission in July this year.

The move means the supervision of consumer credit and broader financial markets now comes under the remit of a single conduct regulator.

Specialist lenders have been told the advertising of credit products, assessments of loan affordability and suitability, and complaints handling are among the issues the FMA has in its sights.

Staff from the authority outlined their approach and reflected on the first 100-plus days since the changeover during a special session at the Financial Services Federation (FSF) annual conference last month.

The FMA's Anita Frazer, head of licensing and regulatory services, Michael Hewes, director of credit, deposit taking, insurance and advice, and Helena Lewis, acting head of credit, took part in the discussion.

Lyn McMorran, the FSF's executive director, told Autofile they highlighted areas the authority has concerns about and also noted that the transition

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p28 Autofile's tribute to Mark Baker

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Free tools created to boost diversity

Natasha Callister details how new guides can help businesses recruit more women

Women in Automotive New Zealand has marked its registration as an official charity by releasing two free resources.



NATASHA CALLISTER
Trustee & board chair, Women in Automotive NZ

They are a hiring guide, which has been developed with Automotive Employment NZ, and a workplace self-assessment checklist.

These resources aim to tackle an industry-wide problem, which is women remain significantly under-represented across the motor-vehicle workforce while the trade is struggling to fill technical roles.

Motor mechanic, diesel motor mechanic and automotive electrician roles currently sit on Immigration NZ's green list.

Separately, recruiting women into retail sales roles is one of the most common challenges that organisations report to us.

The shortage isn't only about supply. It's also about which parts of the industry women can see themselves in.

Choosing the best person for the job should always remain the priority. However, as Russell Phillips, managing director of Automotive Employment NZ, says: "Organisations that are intentional about how they attract, assess and select talent can access a wider and more diverse pool of high-quality candidates. Following recruitment best practice doesn't compromise quality, it strengthens it."

Hiring for Gender Diversity is a step-by-step guide covering job ad language, recruitment agency briefs, structured interviewing, and what New Zealand employment law does and doesn't allow employers to ask.

It includes links to a free gender decoder tool employers can run any job advert through in less than five minutes.

The Workplace Warrant of Fitness is a 28-point self-assessment covering facilities, personal protective equipment and uniform fit, workplace policies, career progression and culture.

It's designed as an internal planning tool. Businesses work through it themselves to identify practical improvement priorities at no cost and no obligation to publish or share the result.

Since Women in Automotive New Zealand began, many business people have said they are right behind the cause.

They want more women in their organisations, a more diverse pool of candidates and to keep the women they hire, but they're also looking for practical strategies to do that. These resources aim to offer clear, workable guidance.

When females can see a future in automotive and get real support to build a career in it, everyone benefits – the women, companies and the public.

We are one part of that effort alongside employers, training providers and women themselves.

These free tools are a small contribution on the journey.

You can access them at womeninautomotive.nz/employers. No membership or sign-up is required to download them.

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of CCCFA oversight has gone "extremely smoothly" so far.

"Vehicle finance is one of their priorities and they're still concerned about the intermedial relationship between dealers and lenders," says McMorran.

"The lenders obviously have the responsibility for ensuring affordability and suitability checks are done properly.

"If someone can only really afford a $15,000 car then you shouldn't be talking to them about borrowing $20,000.

"The FMA has got a focus on it and that's fine. FSF members will be working with their car dealers to ensure they know what the processes are, what their credit criteria are and that sort of thing.

"Complaints handling is another area they're focusing on.

"If a complaint comes in about a loan, add-on product or whatever, how is it being handled? Does the board have an overview of complaints and what those complaints are about to give them any sense of whether there are any systemic problems?"



Rawdon Christie, former business journalist and broadcaster, was MC for the conference

The advertising of credit is also high on the FMA's agenda because dealers need to understand such adverts must meet CCCFA requirements.

"That can be a little bit difficult if they have a panel of three or four different lenders that they use," explains McMorran. "In such cases, they should run advertisements past all the lenders to ensure they're compliant and not saying something they shouldn't.

"It's not a good thing for car dealers to suggest there will be no credit checks because very likely there will be from at least some of those lenders they have a relationship with."

While the FMA staff noted issues it will be keeping a watch on, they also spoke to delegates at the conference about the positive engagement it has had with finance providers in recent months.

Lending and credit are new areas for the regulator, but several experienced credit experts from the Commerce Commission transferred to the authority as part of this year's change.

McMorran adds the FMA has built a relationship with the FSF and its members that feels "more engaging" and is "very strong".

This has been helped by the authority hosting specific round-tables for businesses through the transition process and conducting ongoing consultation.

"They are definitely putting themselves out to try to understand consumer credit, and the differences between that and a managed investment fund," she says.

"They talked at the conference about the level of engagement they've had with lenders through the FSF, which has most of the major motor-vehicle lenders as members, and how helpful it has been for them to have that channel to so many credit providers.

"They're also saying if lenders have any questions, they should reach out to the FMA and not be afraid to engage with them."

As part of the regulatory change, lenders previously certified or exempt from certification because they were licensed by the FMA or Reserve Bank were automatically deemed to hold a market-services licence from the authority for being creditors under a consumer credit contract from July 1.

McMorran notes that process was seamless. However, there will be some new licence conditions for businesses and the FMA is consulting on those.

"That's about the expectations lenders will be managing with their intermediaries and making sure appropriate affordability and suitability assessments are being done. So nothing too scary but it's the first time they have had conditions put on them."

After hearing what the FMA had to say at the conference, she has some basic advice for those operating in the automotive space.

"For motor-vehicle lenders, it's very much about making sure you've got strong relationships with your dealers, ensuring your dealers are across your credit policy and regularly monitoring all complaints to determine whether there are any systemic issues," says McMorran.

"Record keeping is also important. Again, if the regulator comes calling and asks, 'why did you lend to this person?' if you've got good records that say, 'well, these were the mitigating factors', then that's really going to help to avoid an investigation."

HANDLING COMPLAINTS

The FSF's annual conference, held at the Pullman Hotel in Auckland, attracted people from across New Zealand and Australia to exchange ideas, explore emerging challenges and discuss the industry's future.

Besides discussions with the FMA, the impact of the fuel crisis on businesses, potential political changes and combating fraud were also on the day's agenda.

"All the speakers were fantastic and we had someone from NZ Police's financial intelligence unit talking about what happens with suspicious transaction reports that might come out of a car

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dealership," says McMorran. "They explained how that gets put into their system to identify where there might be money laundering going on or proceeds of crime being laundered through the purchase of a vehicle.

"Also, I ran a session for our commercial lenders with dispute resolution services, with commercial motor vehicle lenders in the room for that one, about how they handle complaints from businesses and whether they put a CCCFA lens on it."

She had earlier opened the October 16 event before Professor Robert Patman, of the University of Otago, set the scene by speaking about major geopolitical trends and New Zealand's response.

David Farrar, principal and founder of Wellington-based political polling and research company, Curia Market Research, shared his views with the audience on what's likely to happen after the general election.

However, McMorran notes Farrar admitted he didn't know for sure because this year's political race was "so close it's too hard to tell".

Jarrod Kerr, Kiwibank's chief economist, delivered a presentation about what's happening in the economy, and the challenges of forecasting in a world that doesn't stand still and where everything seems to be changing.

McMorran says the takeaway from his session was that "all you can really rely on is that nothing remains the same for long".

The conference ended with a speech from Todd Hunter, chair of the FSF's executive committee, and Turners Automotive Group's chief executive, before a networking celebration.

"We've been getting great feedback about the conference," adds McMorran. "Even people who came across the Tasman have been saying how great it was and that it had the best programme ever.

"That's always great to hear but it puts the pressure on for next year's event to ensure it's as good, if not better.

"About 170 people attended. That was a little bit lower than we would have liked. But with the pressures at the moment, it meant businesses that might have sent three people in the past maybe sent two people this time. It was still a good attendance. We were pleased with the numbers and the conference had a good vibe about it because the room was full."



From left, Lyn McMorran, executive director of the FSF, Greig Epps, VIA's chief executive, and the FMA's Michael Hewes

'LENDING RESPONSIBLY'

McMorran also reflected on amendments made to the CCCFA in the middle of this year, which the coalition said were designed to simplify the rules, reduce unnecessary compliance costs and support a more competitive lending market.

The reforms came after many businesses found providing credit harder and slower under changes to the act made by the previous Labour government.

"Getting rid of those restrictive affordability regulations implemented in December 2021 was absolutely necessary," she says.

"Our members are still declining a lot of loans, which shows that if they feel the loan is not affordable, then it won't go ahead. They're lending responsibly without needing to be told they must check how many times a week a person drinks coffee.

"The thing that does concern us is what would happen if there's a change of government and what sort of fiddling with the CCCFA they would want to do. We don't have a sense of that at this stage, but the chances are any new government wouldn't leave it as it is. That would not necessarily be a good thing.

"It was proven that by placing those restrictive affordability regulations on everybody, many people who needed access to credit were unable to get it from a responsible lender, and there's no doubt there are unregistered, unscrupulous lenders out there who will lend to people who are desperate.

"It's not helpful to anybody if we push people back into having to make those kinds of decisions."

Looking ahead in general, McMorran says FSF members remain reasonably upbeat despite the challenging economic times and uncertainty about what may happen next.

"It's hard to forecast too far ahead in this world we're living in at the moment. But our members seem fairly positive and they are still talking about the fact arrears are fairly low.

"They're not concerned about things getting out of control or people being unable to make their payments, so they're open for business and ready to do business, which is a good thing."

> **It's not a good thing for car dealers to suggest there will be no credit checks**
>
> – Lyn McMorran

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Dealers in demise over debt

A Christchurch dealership has gone into liquidation owing nearly $1.36 million after a finance company placed the business into receivership in December 2025.

Shareholders of Good Cars appointed Brenton Hunt, of Insolvency Matters, as liquidator on October 20.

Hunt filed his first report with Companies Office on October 28 and predicts no creditors are likely to get any money back.

The statement of affairs shows the used-car business, which operated in the suburb of Waltham, owes $610,000 to Inland Revenue (IR), $24,000 to staff in wages and holiday pay, and a further $625,000 to unsecured creditors.

About $100,000 is also owed to the finance company as the general secured creditor. The report lists nearly 60 unsecured creditors and five secured creditors.



Good Cars in Christchurch has appointed a liquidator

Hunt says IR has started legal proceedings against Good Cars for unpaid tax assessments. He is unaware of any other legal action involving the company.

"It's not practicable to provide an estimated date for the completion of the liquidation but it will probably be within a 12-month period," he adds.

"It is also not possible to provide a definitive statement as to whether sufficient assets will be realised for making payment to any class of creditor but it is looking unlikely."

Sergey Serikov and Iouri Serikov are listed as the directors and shareholders of Good Cars, which was founded in 2014 and previously traded as Auckland City Motors.

Hunt's report states the directors said the business became insolvent after struggling for some time to achieve significant margins, which led to difficulties with working capital and a loan going into default. The receivers have sold all assets and stock.

'INSUFFICIENT ASSETS'

A car trader in St Johns, Auckland, has entered liquidation because it lacks sufficient assets to meet its liabilities.

Premium Automotive NZ, which sold new and used vehicles as Auto Aspire, was incorporated in January 2022.

Its director Lukas Roslin passed a resolution on October 9 to appoint Steven Khov and Kieran Jones as joint liquidators. Their report notes there were 16 known creditors as of October 16.

The company's assets and the total owed have yet to be determined, although a statement of Premium Automotive NZ's affairs shows IR has a preferential claim for $124,871 and Heartland Bank is owed $89,167. Unsecured creditors are owed $25,596.

Legal proceedings by a finance company have begun in respect of the business' assets and a freezing order was also put in place before liquidation.

Khov and Jones say: "The reason for the failure of the company, which led to the appointment of the liquidators, is due to it having insufficient assets to satisfy its liabilities and having active legal proceedings from a financier."

The liquidators, who have taken possession of the company's tangible assets, have requested the dealership's books, records and legal files.

They have also frozen its bank account and issued notices to secured creditors asking for details of their debt and securities.

Khov and Jones say it's too early to comment on any possible recoveries, the likelihood of a distribution and an estimated date for completing the liquidation.

FINANCE FIRM ACTS

A luxury motor-vehicle dealership in Petone, Lower Hutt, has been placed into receivership by a finance company amid suggestions the owner has left New Zealand.

Jessica Kellow and Iain Shephard, of BDO Wellington, were appointed as receivers and managers of O'Reilly's Garage on October 21.

The finance firm appointed Kellow and Shephard under the powers of a general security deed dated July 26, 2022, granted by the trader in relation to all its present and after-acquired property, the notice of appointment says.

Simon O'Reilly is the sole director of the company, which was incorporated in 2017, and its last annual return was filed in May this year. Media reports suggest O'Reilly has left his Wellington home and is now in Europe.

The dealership's website has been shut and its showroom is being marketed for lease by Bayleys.

O'Reilly's Garage's LinkedIn page remains active and says the business stocked "some of the best models from the finest car manufacturers".

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Coalition u-turn on safety rules

The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) has welcomed the government's flip-flop on plans to mandate extra safety technology requirements on cars.

The decision, which was announced by the NZTA on October 13, came almost 10 months after consultation closed on proposals for more advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) to be fitted and operational when vehicles cross the border.

The plans for imported light models would have required lane-departure warning or lane-keep assist, autonomous emergency braking, and an acoustic warning system for EVs and hybrids.

The start dates would have been October 2026 for new light vehicles, and July next year for existing models and used imports.

In addition, electronic stability control and anti-lock braking systems would have become mandatory for new and used heavy vehicles.

Greig Epps, VIA's chief executive, says the decision against proceeding recognises the importance of balancing safety improvements with affordability and the need to renew the country's ageing fleet.



James Meager

"We all want safer vehicles on New Zealand roads," he adds. "The question has always been how we achieve that in a way that delivers the greatest benefit for motorists.

"Mandating technology before it's widely available in the affordable used market risks making replacements more expensive and reducing the range of vehicles available to consumers."

James Meager, Associate Minister of Transport, notes many new vehicles are fitted with the features that were considered and the technology is expected to become increasingly common without regulation.

"The proposed requirements would primarily bring forward uptake likely to occur anyway," says an NZTA spokesperson.

"Analysis by Ministry for Cities, Environment, Regions and Transport officials showed mandating the features would provide limited additional safety benefits while potentially increasing vehicle costs.

"Thank you for your interest in this work and to everyone who took the time to make a submission. Your feedback helped inform the decision."

No official announcement was made by Meager or Chris Bishop, Minister of Transport, on October's ditching of the proposed policy.

Epps says not going ahead with the plans reflects concerns VIA raised during the consultation process, which ran from October 29 to December 17 last year.

"New Zealand's market is different from those of countries that rely primarily on new-vehicle sales," he explains.

"Used imports are a major source of affordable replacement vehicles for households.

"The average used vehicle imported is now around 10 to 11 years old. Safety technology introduced into new vehicles overseas takes time to become widely available at prices New Zealanders can afford.

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"If regulation makes those replacements harder to obtain, people may keep their existing, older vehicles for longer. That can work against the very safety improvements regulation is intended to achieve."

VIA has consistently argued such policies should focus on improving the fleet's safety rather than assessing the benefits of individual technologies in isolation.

"Newer vehicles generally offer safety improvements over those they replace. Maintaining a reliable supply of affordable used imports helps New Zealand progressively renew its fleet and bring those improvements onto our roads.

"This decision doesn't mean abandoning safety improvements.

"It recognises technology is already entering the market and regulation needs to demonstrate benefits beyond what would happen naturally."

Epps adds the decision highlights the value of industry consultation and evidence-based policymaking.

"VIA provided detailed analysis of the likely effects on the used-vehicle market. We're pleased the government has considered the potential benefits and costs to consumers.

"We look forward to continuing to work with officials on policies that improve vehicle safety while supporting affordability, choice and fleet renewal."



'OPPORTUNITY MISSED'

The Motor Trade Association (MTA) is disappointed the government has decided against mandating any of the extra assistance systems that were on the table for new and used imports.

The coalition last month confirmed it will not proceed with its plans after consultation in late 2025 and further analysis by officials this year.

James McDowall, head of advocacy, says the MTA supported the proposals and notes some could have been phased in rather than being dropped entirely.

"We're disappointed none of the options are proceeding," he adds.

"While we accept the changes would have been harder to mandate and implement for used imports, they would have been straightforward to apply to new vehicles.

"Acoustic alerting for quiet electric and hybrid vehicles is a good example of a missed opportunity given the benefit for pedestrians at relatively low cost."

McDowall says most new vehicles coming into the country already have the ADAS features that were proposed, "so the cost of locking them in was low and would have set a clear baseline for the fleet".

As for used imports, the MTA acknowledged during consultation the difficulties of verifying features vehicle by vehicle and added any transition needs to reflect what's available in source markets. "We accept the government's view that uptake will happen in any case."

That said, New Zealand needs to modernise its fleet gradually for safety and emissions. "The price argument has some weight and the full package on the timetable proposed may not have been the right call. But that simply means change should have been phased in and not abandoned altogether."

The MTA's wider concern is changes to the warrant of fitness (WOF) regime with vehicles up to 14 years old having moved to two-yearly inspections from the start of November, which the coalition considered at the same time as the ADAS proposals.

"The safety features consulted on in parallel were the one thing the government could have pointed to as lifting the safety baseline while inspection intervals lengthened," says McDowall.

"Dropping all of them removes even that. We would hope the proposals were serious from the outset rather than there to make the WOF extension easier to accept.

"Whether or not these features are mandated, they are arriving in the fleet and the practical issue for road safety is keeping them working.

"Camera and radar systems need recalibration after windscreen replacement, bumper work or collision repair, and that still needs proper standards behind it. That work doesn't go away with this decision."

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PROGRESS AT RISK

The Motor Industry Association (MIA) warns safety standards for vehicles imported into New Zealand risk falling behind other markets with the coalition scrapping its ADAS proposals, which were announced as part of wider land-transport rule reforms.

"The MIA is disappointed by the government's decision not to introduce new safety requirements for imported vehicles," a spokesperson told Autofile.

"We advocated for these technologies to be adopted in line with established international standards and with practical implementation timeframes.

"Technologies such as autonomous emergency braking and lane-keeping systems are proven to reduce crashes, and New Zealand risks falling out of step with other countries introducing these requirements.

"While many new vehicles already have these features and manufacturers will continue to introduce them, the question now is how New Zealand will maintain progress in vehicle safety without additional mandatory entry standards."

TARGETED FEATURES

The coalition was extolling the virtues of ADAS when it unveiled its proposals in October last year.

The announcement followed the government policy statement on land transport 2024, which includes a commitment to review vehicle regulatory systems to enable the better management of safety performance, reduce red tape and ensure rules are fit for purpose.

On the back of this, the NZTA and Ministry of Transport announced an investigation into targeted features for light and heavy vehicles entering the fleet.

It considered the extra ADAS for three "key reasons".

The first was the systems are already mandated in countries New Zealand imports most of its vehicles from.

Evidence shows the likes of automatic emergency braking, lane-keep assist, electronic stability control and anti-lock braking systems are effective in reducing the types of crashes most common on our roads.

Acoustic alert systems can potentially enhance safety for other road users, particularly as quieter electric and hybrid vehicles become more prevalent.

The problem to be addressed was New Zealand's road-safety statistics being worse than comparable jurisdictions.

In 2023, there were 341 deaths and 2,453 serious injuries on Kiwi roads, while our annual rate of accident fatalities is higher than in similar countries.

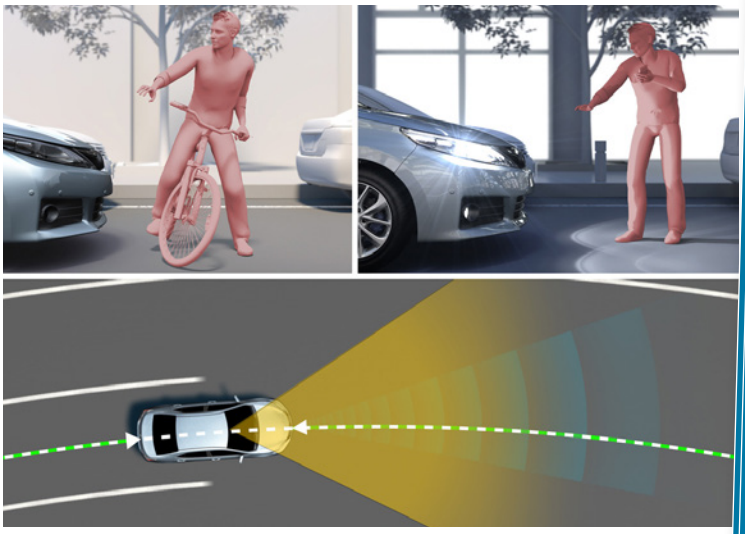
In 2021, there were 6.8 road deaths per billion vehicle-kilometres travelled, which exceeded the rate in Australia, Ireland and Norway.

The NZTA's summary document on the now-canned ADAS proposals states other countries mandate certain systems on imports that New Zealand doesn't.

For example, vehicles crossing our border must have features such as electronic stability control, seatbelts, airbags and front crumple zones.

But in recent years, other jurisdictions have introduced extra requirements for light and heavy vehicles. The agency's document adds Aotearoa sources from several of them such as Australia, Japan and Europe.

"As these features become a requirement in our source markets, more vehicles in New Zealand are expected to include them over time," says the NZTA.



"However, given the relatively older average age of vehicles in our fleet and the significant number of used imports, we expect there will be vehicles without these features on New Zealand roads for a long time to come.

"If requirements remain out of step with key overseas jurisdictions, there's a risk we become a target for less safe vehicles excluded from other markets.

"Several countries with smaller economies and poorer road-safety outcomes have implemented stricter import controls than those we enforce. For example, Samoa enforces a 10-year rolling age ban and Kenya applies an eight-year age limit.

"Mandating features discussed in this document could accelerate their fitment by several years and prevent a residual market for vehicles without these features.

"However, potential changes in the market, such as new manufacturers and changing consumer habits, make it difficult to estimate the scale of the long-term benefits."

HEAVY VEHICLE CHANGES

The coalition unveiled 28 proposals on October 19 to update heavy vehicle rules, claiming they will reduce compliance costs and improve productivity for transport operators.

Meager says consultation has started to make it easier for operators "to get on with the job", support more productive freight movements and maintain high safety standards.

The proposals form phase three of the heavy-vehicle productivity workstream under the government's land-transport rules reform programme. They include allowing these vehicles to carry more weight and freight to cut their number of road movements.

Fire trucks would be exempt from mass limits so they can be driven to incidents without creating "mountains of paperwork". Crane and sucker trucks will be permitted to operate more easily under specialist weight limits.

There will be extra flexibility about where and when over-dimension operators can operate, including on tolled roads and Auckland's motorways, while these vehicles' travel-time restrictions will be relaxed.

The consultation also seeks feedback on exempting rigid agricultural vehicles from existing mass limits subject to restrictions to protect critical infrastructure. This is a change the sector has strongly called for.

"This continues our earlier work, which delivered practical changes to reduce red tape, more flexible licensing for low and zero-emissions heavy vehicles, and new load pilot signage," says Meager.

"Freight keeps New Zealand moving. This is about fixing the basics and ensuring we have practical, up-to-date rules which help operators work safely and efficiently."

Early adoption

It was late 2017 when the second generation of Toyota Safety Sense was revealed for market roll-out the following year.

The system featured lane-tracing assist (LTA) to keep the car in the centre of a lane by assisting the driver's steering when using dynamic radar cruise control.

LTA came with lane-departure alert. With the ability to recognise shoulders on straight roads without white lane markings, it gave alerts when deviating off and assisted in regaining track.

There were also pre-collision features to help mitigate and prevent collisions with vehicles and pedestrians ahead.

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Understanding what buyers need

More than 50 invited customers of a dealership in Auckland have got up close and personal with the all-new ES.

An evening at Lexus of North Shore in Wairau Valley was a chance for them to explore the vehicle's design and technology, and ask team members questions before experiencing it on the road.


Mark Jago

"These events are about much more than introducing a new model," says Mark Jago, chief executive officer. "They are an opportunity to spend time with our customers, understand what's important to them and share in their excitement about the next generation of Lexus.

"The ES has long resonated with New Zealanders for its refinement, comfort and exceptionally quiet driving experience. This new generation represents a significant evolution while retaining the qualities that have made it such an important part of the range."

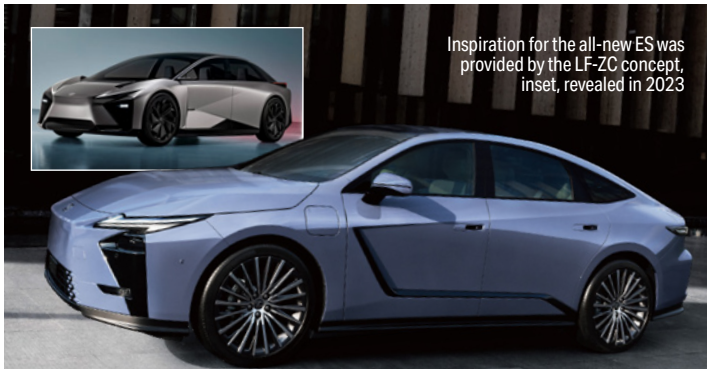
For the first time in this country, the ES will be available with both hybrid and battery-electric powertrains, reflecting the marque's multi-pathway approach to electrification.

It's a choice Jago describes as increasingly important. "Customers are at different stages of their transition to electrified vehicles and it's our experience there's no single solution that suits everyone.

"The new ES gives customers the ability to choose the powertrain that best fits their lifestyle, driving habits and expectations.

"There's also a much stronger presence to the new ES. Inspired by the LF-ZC concept revealed in 2023, its sleeker design, increased height and more spacious cabin give it a contemporary character while retaining the sophistication associated with the ES."


Lexus of North Shore's reveal of the new ES at the start of last month


Inspiration for the all-new ES was provided by the LF-ZC concept, inset, revealed in 2023

The ES 500e Dynamic's battery-electric powertrain is complemented by Lexus' interactive manual drive, which features an eight-speed virtual gear set-up. In manual mode, drivers can use the paddle shifters to choose gears, while the low-mounted battery lowers the centre of gravity to enhance dynamic capability and deliver a sporty drive.

The new ES is the marque's first model launched here with Lexus Connected Services, which Jago says is important "because technology should make ownership easier and much more reassuring".

With pricing from $96,900 plus on-road costs for the hybrid ES 300h Premium through to $109,900 for the all-electric ES 500e Dynamic, the range "presents a compelling proposition".

Jago adds: "While technology, design and powertrain choices are important, what stood out most to us at our launch was the response from customers.

"Their questions, reactions to the vehicle and conversations we had reinforced what makes Lexus different. Ultimately, our business is built around relationships and sharing a significant new model with customers in this way is something we value enormously."

Focus on workforce

East & South Toyota, formerly Manukau Toyota Group, has appointed Nadine Bell as its chief executive officer.

She succeeds Darren Smart, who led the company for seven-and-a-half years, and previously was chief operating officer since January 2025.

Bell's appointment provides continuity at a significant point in the group's development, and follows a career covering automotive retail, distribution, customer experience, sales, marketing and after-sales.

"It's a privilege to lead East & South Toyota and a team with such deep knowledge, commitment and connection to our business, customers and communities," she says. "My focus is on giving our people the clarity, support and opportunities they need to succeed while continuing to build a strong, loyal workplace culture."

Bell's appointment coincided with the company's name being changed from Manukau Toyota Group to East & South Toyota. This had been in the pipeline for several months and has evolved a legacy name into one that's "future-focused and better reflects the region in which the group operates".


Nadine Bell

The business operates four Auckland stores in Botany, Manukau, Papakura and Pukekohe. The new name brings these under an identity that more clearly represents its footprint.

Bell began her career with Honda NZ in 2000 where she established the first national multi-channel automotive contact centre. Over some two decades there, she progressed through senior positions.

Her tenure there culminated as general manager of after-sales and customer.

She then became group general manager of Appliance Connexion, leading the group's services and franchise support operation, before she joined Armstrong's in 2022 as chief marketing officer.

Takeover of company complete

David Sena has taken the business he co-founded in 2011 back into private ownership.

The chief executive of 2 Cheap Cars (2CC) has thanked advisers and stakeholders for their support after his takeover led to the company being delisted on October 21.

"I also want to express my deepest gratitude to our directors, staff and shareholders who travelled along this journey with us, and the NZX for the opportunity for 2CC to be listed," he said.

"It has been a tremendously interesting six-year journey during which I have learned about many different aspects of the corporate world."

His investment company, Sena & Co, became 2 Cheap Cars' "dominant owner" on October 7.

Sena held 75.92 per cent of shares before making his offer and hit his target of 90 per cent in late September.

His shareholding was 99.42 per cent by October 15. The timetable for delisting was finalised three days before that after a compulsory acquisition notice was issued to those who had failed to accept his offer of 90 cents per share before it closed on October 9.

NZ RegCo advised it was suspending trading in 2CC shares from the end of trading on October 19. The business was delisted two days later.

Shareholders who didn't accept the offer had until November 3 to voluntarily transfer their holdings to Sena & Co, which then had to pay the consideration and complete its compulsory acquisitions by November 10.

Chairman Michael Stiassny said: "On behalf of the board, I thank shareholders for their loyalty over recent years.

"The company has experienced considerable turbulence, including a period of board instability which took a toll on shareholder value and confidence.



2 Cheap Cars is back in private ownership

"Since the reconstituted board was appointed in 2023, the company has restored stability, returned to profitability and resumed dividends. The final offer of $0.90 per share reflects that recovery and is a good outcome for shareholders. It has been a privilege to serve the company and its shareholders."

It was back on July 27 that Sena & Co made a full takeover offer to acquire all ordinary shares in 2 Cheap Cars it didn't already own for 80c each. This was increased by 10c on September 16, some 12 days before the company's annual meeting.

At the time, Sena conceded it was clear his offer would fail to clear the minimum acceptance condition at 80c. The 90c offer was a premium of 36 per cent on 2CC's closing price of 66c on July 9, the last trading day before his takeover notice was lodged.

He said his revised offer represented 5.8 times 2CC's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation of $8.1 million for the year ending March 31, 2026. It was the "final and best price" he was willing to pay.

He pointed out trading in July was "weaker" than in 2026/27's first quarter.

The company reported unaudited net profit after tax (NPAT) of $330,000 for August as business continued to be "volatile".

Sena emphasised the company was best positioned to realise its potential by being privately owned to enable focused, founder-led decision-making.

"Being able to respond decisively to market conditions through investment is critical. This may result in periods of heightened investment to expand into areas such as providing finance or an increase in sales yards or inventory.

"Being able to make such decisions without regard to minority shareholders, many of whom rely on dividends, will maximise the long-term value of the business."

Sena added the general election had introduced extra uncertainty.

"Opposition parties have proposed policy changes that, if adopted, could increase employment costs and strengthen the clean vehicle standard [CVS] in ways that could materially increase acquisition costs.

"However, Sena & Co considers these uncertainties reinforce the benefits of operating 2CC as a privately owned business where management can respond quickly to changing economic, regulatory and market conditions, and make investment decisions with a longer-term focus."



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Big changes for dealerships

Autofile delves into the many developments happening at yards across the country



The Kia dealership on Auckland's North Shore

Kia NZ has announced major deals to bolster its presence in very different areas – on Auckland's North Shore and in rural Waikato.

The marque hopes to accelerate its expansion on the North Shore, a part of the city it describes as one of the car industry's most important markets for growth.

It has penned a strategic deal with the Ingham Group, which was already a partner of the South Korean brand thanks to its Taupo dealership.

The North Shore franchise in Target Road became operational in mid-October. To support the opening, staff there had first views of the next-generation Seltos.

It will then be followed by the PV5 Passenger all-electric van later this year.

Trent Ingham, chief executive of the Ingham Group, believes the new venture is an opportunity to build on its partnership with Kia and has created jobs at its North Shore site. The company also represents Hyundai, Nissan, Isuzu, Renault and Chery in that part of the city.

He adds: "Kia is entering one of the most exciting periods in its history. With strong momentum across the range and growing demand from New Zealanders, it's important we continue to build the strength of the brand in the region as well as elevate it.

"I'm confident the team we have is ready to meet customers' expectations and provide a high ownership experience."

Todd McDonald, managing director of Kia NZ, describes appointing the Ingham Group as an exciting opportunity for both organisations.

He explains: "The North Shore represents one of the most dynamic automotive markets in New Zealand with a strong customer base and significant opportunities. We wanted a partner that shares our ambition for the region and has the capability to grow the brand.

"There was interest from well-established automotive retailers and I'm delighted our new partner is Ingham. It has a clear belief in the future of Kia and enthusiasm for opportunities that exist on the Shore."

The Giltrap Group announced in July its representation of the marque at Wairau Road, North Shore, was ending in the middle of last month.

Kia has also welcomed Brian Tunnicliffe Motor Group, a family-owned company, to its network.

The business in Paeroa, north Waikato, is led by general manager Nicole Tunnicliffe with Mark Wilkin as dealer principal.

McDonald says the appointment brings generational stability, deep local knowledge and a long-term commitment to customers in the town as well as the wider Hauraki and Coromandel districts.

"Provincial New Zealand has played a significant role in our success," he adds.

"We are committed to ensuring customers in communities such as Paeroa continue to receive sales and after-sales support close to home.

"We're excited to partner with a business that shares our values and long-term outlook. Its 35 years of experience, strong community involvement and multi-generational approach provide a solid foundation for growth."

Tunnicliffe says the partnership is an exciting step forward.

"We're building on a strong foundation, continued investment in communities and ensuring customers have access to the latest products and service they expect from the brand."


Nicole Tunnicliffe

NEW-LOOK SHOWROOM

Archibalds has celebrated the official opening of its revamped Range Rover Defender showroom in Christchurch after an 11-month building project and multi-million-dollar investment.

The extended showroom in Tuam Street adds 388sqm and the ability to display seven cars.

Sales, service, parts and accessories have been brought together under one roof as part of the redevelopment.

New on-site spaces include a configuration studio, client consultation room and lounge, dedicated handover bay, multiple client lounges, an accessories wall and barista bar.

The changes have created extra roles at the business with a host, technician and salesperson taking the team to 27.

The project has involved a large team of consultants and subcontractors, led by engineer

[continued on page 16]



Archibalds' revamped Range Rover showroom in Christchurch and the new Defender on show

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AUCTION ONLINE

[continued from page 14]



JAC Southland staff – dealer principal Jason Taylor flanked by sales team members Josh Haywood, left, and Morne Else



Mark Ross, vehicle sales manager of Whyteline in Paeroa

and architect Engenium and head contractor Hanham & Philp.

General manager Mark Milligan says: "Archibalds has been part of the Jaguar Land Rover story for decades and this is our most significant investment in that relationship.

"We've built a space around the way our clients want to experience Range Rover, Defender and Discovery, from configuring their vehicles to taking the keys. It's a big step towards our ambition of being the South Island's leading premium-vehicle destination. We're proud to open the doors."

The showroom's official opening on September 24 was attended by about 80 guests, including members of the JLR owners' club and members of the marque's senior leadership. On display was the limited-edition Defender Trophy Edition.

SITES FOLLOW DEMAND

JAC NZ has unveiled four new sales locations to expand its regional footprint. Dealerships have opened in Paeroa and Invercargill, while pop-ups are now operating in Cromwell and Blenheim.

The growth of the marque's network between August and last month coincides with the launch of the T9 PHEV, which is available alongside a diesel version of the ute.

The brand has teamed up with Whyteline in Paeroa, a family-owned dealership with more than 50 years of sales and servicing experience. It was founded by the late John Whyte and is now run by his son Mark.

Arthur Burke Ltd, which has held a JAC franchise in Amberley, about 50km north of Christchurch, since October 2025, has been appointed to run a pop-up yard in Blenheim.

Sales manager Tim McCracken and general manager Craig Schroder head up the team and support the pop-up.

Meanwhile, Jason Taylor Vehicle Sales now has a JAC dealership in Invercargill and a pop-up site in Cromwell. A family business since 2005, Jason, his wife Suzanne and the team know their community and customers.

Andrew Craw, general manager of JAC NZ, says the expansion reflects where demand is.

"We've seen the appetite for JAC across these regions – whether that's in the east of the North Island or chatting to people at Southern Field Days in Gore – and it's important we put the right people in place to support that."

JAC started selling the T9 diesel ute here in late 2024 and added the PHEV model to its line-up after launching it at this year's Fieldays at Mystery Creek, Hamilton.


Tim McCracken, left, and Craig Schroder of Arthur Burke Ltd

PROJECT TAKES OFF

Miles Toyota is expanding its footprint in Christchurch with a full-service dealership in Richard Pearse Road.

The project will take vehicle sales to its airport operation for the first time in more than three decades.

Expected to open in early 2027, the dealership will offer new and used vehicle sales, finance, parts, servicing, repairs, warrants of fitness, genuine windscreens, tyres and wheel alignments.

The expansion will complement the company's existing Orchard Road operation, which will remain open to support growing servicing and repair demand from large fleet and rental customers.

"We've grown strongly in Christchurch and have reached the point where we need more room to keep giving customers the level of service they expect," says Mark Mills, chief executive officer.

"The airport has been an important part of Miles Toyota for more than 30 years, so adding vehicle sales and creating a full store there will give customers another place to buy and service their Toyota while creating more capacity across our operation."

Miles Toyota Airport has been in the area since 1995 when it opened its Orchard Road workshop.

Service manager Bill Potter has been with the operation since those early days and has seen the airport business grow over the past three decades.

He says: "We've been fortunate to have such a loyal group of customers who continue to trust us with their vehicles.

"Their support has been a huge part of our growth, and it's fantastic to be able to invest back into the area and create an even better experience for them. It is such an exciting time for the Miles Group and I'm looking forward to getting stuck in."

The Richard Pearse Road site will also provide extra capacity for ▶



Miles Toyota at Christchurch Airport


Rick Armstrong and Annaliese Atina


What Ebbett Tauranga's automotive village will look like. Work has started on the site in Tauriko

Miles Toyota's expanding after-sales operations.

It is expected to create extra roles across sales, service, parts, customer care and support with recruitment to take place as the dealership prepares to open.

BRAND'S 'REAL MOMENTUM'

The Armstrong's Group is the new owner of Auckland-based North Harbour Ford and John Andrew Ford.

The acquisitions mark a major expansion of the company's footprint when it comes to the blue oval, and reinforce Ford's "commitment to delivering exceptional service" and support to its customers across the wider Auckland region.

Rick Armstrong, executive director of Armstrong's, says: "Ford is a brand with real momentum in New Zealand, particularly with the strength of Ranger and Everest.

"We are committed to building on strong foundations already in place, investing in our people and facilities, and delivering the standard of sales, service and customer experience we are known for."

Annaliese Atina, managing director of Ford NZ, adds: "Armstrong's has built an outstanding reputation over more than three decades. Its expertise and dealer network align with Ford's ambitions for growth in Auckland. We're confident this transition will deliver lasting benefits for our customers and team members at both dealerships."

Armstrong's is one of New Zealand's largest privately owned dealership groups. Founded in 1993, its head office is in Auckland.

Its dealerships span the City of Sails, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, and its other brands include Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, Mazda, Porsche, Audi, Land Rover, Subaru, Nissan and Volvo.

NINE MARQUES, ONE LOCATION

Ebbett Automotive is planning to move two of its dealership groups, which represent nine brands across four sites, to a purpose-built automotive village in Tauranga.

The location in Tauriko will be home to Ebbett Tauranga, which represents Hyundai, Isuzu, BYD, Forthing and Foton across two branches in the city, and Ebbett Prestige Tauranga, which sells Range Rover, Defender, Discovery, Volvo and Polestar models at two sites in Mount Maunganui.

Ebbett Automotive says next year's consolidation into a single, custom-built destination is

[continued on page 18]

Support to go electric

Drive Electric believes the next government has a chance to build greater long-term certainty around speeding up the shift to EVs.

Replies received to questions it sent out to political parties show while they may differ on how to support the switch, they also reveal some common ground.

National, Labour, the Greens and Opportunity Party answered Drive Electric's inquiries about vehicle supply, affordability and demand, charging infrastructure, freight and renewable energy in New Zealand.

Kirsten Corson, Drive Electric's chair, says: "What is encouraging is alignment around the challenge and need to move towards more electric transport.

"There's recognition we need to address the affordability of making the switch, continue building charging infrastructure, remove barriers to electrifying commercial transport and ensure our electricity system can support growing demand."

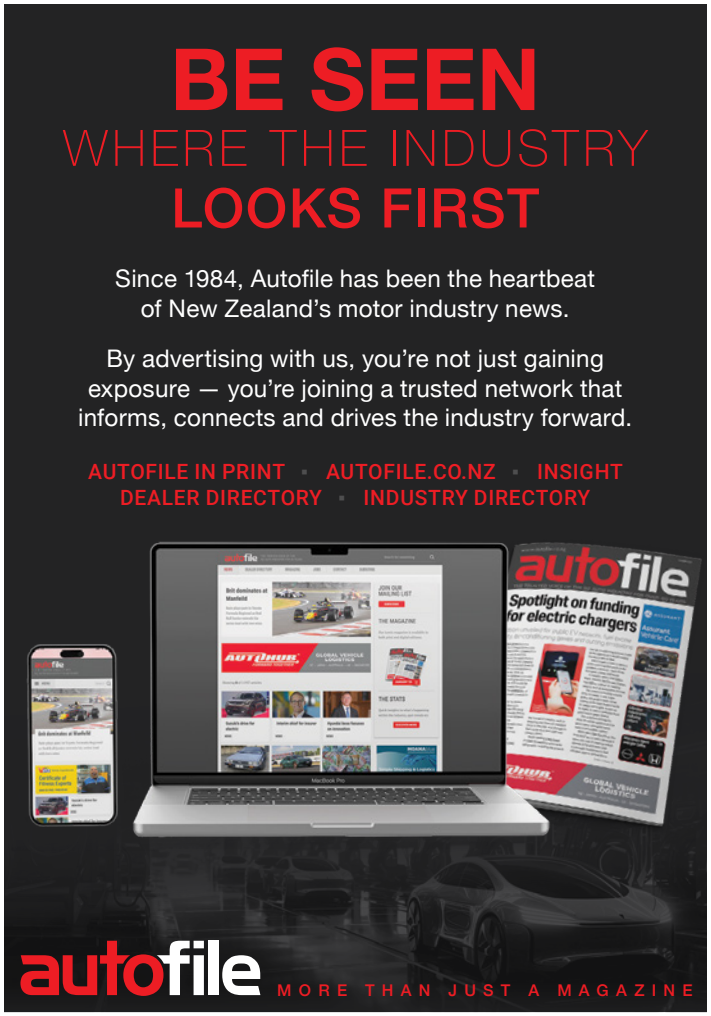
Corson adds New Zealand spent $12.1 billion importing fuel in the year to July, up by $2.3b on the previous 12 months. She believes this makes electrification bigger than an environmental issue.

"This is about economic resilience, energy security, and the cost of moving people and goods around the country.

"Electrification gives us an opportunity to use more of our own energy, and reduce exposure to the volatility of international fuel prices and supply chains."

The four parties that responded suggested different mechanisms and levels of government intervention to effect change.

However, common themes included improving access to electric transport, investment in infrastructure, addressing barriers to commercial and freight electrification, and ensuring sufficient electricity supply.



[continued from page 17]

happening because both groups have outgrown their existing sites.

"Tauranga is an important part of the Ebbett family," says Walter van den Engel, managing director. "This investment reflects the value we place on the people who trust us with their cars, families and time.

"We're building a home in Tauriko designed around excellence and the relationships we hope to have with our customers for a lifetime, not just a single purchase."

The automotive village will include an expanded showroom experience and service facilities. It's expected to open in late 2027 with Ebbett Tauranga located at 409 Taurakura Drive and Ebbett Prestige Tauranga at 180 Kaweroa Drive.

Ebbett's current Tauranga sites in Cameron Road, Third Avenue and Hewletts Road will operate as normal until the move.

Richard van den Engel, executive director of Ebbett Automotive, says: "The new site will give our Tauranga teams the space to deliver the kind of showroom and service experience our customers deserve."



The Miles Mazda dealership on Auckland's North Shore

NORTH SHORE BASE

Miles Mazda has become the exclusive new home for the marque's customers on Auckland's North Shore.

The franchise in Fred Thomas Drive, Takapuna, is part of the Miles North Shore precinct, which is home to some of the group's highest-performing dealerships.

David Hodge, managing director of Mazda Motors of NZ, says: "Miles is the natural partner to represent us on the North Shore. The timing couldn't be better. It joins at a time when we're bringing some incredible new vehicles to market."

The all-new CX-5, and all-electric 6e and CX-6e, are recent arrivals here.

"The Miles Group and our business are well-known for providing strong service, driven by real passion for our customers and brands we represent," adds Hodge. "Given this alignment with Mazda, the decision to represent the brand makes a lot of sense to our entire team."

He says the partnership was many months in the making. "Miles Mazda brings a reputation for delivering outstanding experiences and an investment in state-of-the-art facilities, a commitment that now extends to customers on the North Shore."

FRANCHISE ON THE MOVE

David Jones Motors in Whanganui is becoming a Kia dealership in addition to the other franchises it holds, which are Suzuki, Nissan, Hyundai and Mitsubishi.

The news comes with Ignition Motor Group set to close at the end of November as owner Ken Williams retires at the age of 73 after more than five decades in the industry. He leases the site of his dealership in Saint Hill Street, which has been sold for development.

Williams and his wife bought the business, which was called Guthrie Holden and Kia, in 2012 and renamed it. They moved to the corner of Saint Hill and Dublin streets about six years later.

Holden went with General Motors pulling the marque from both sides of the Tasman in 2020, and Mahindra and Peugeot joined Kia in its place.

Williams' family involvement in the trade started in 1927 when his grandfather HJC Williams founded Williams & Adams in Wellington, which imported and assembled vehicles.

Looking ahead, Kia NZ says partnering with the Jones family reinforces its long-term commitment to provincial New Zealand and communities that have supported the marque.

The marque and David Jones Motors, which is in its 40th year as a vehicle retailer, are "embracing a new chapter that will ensure customers continue to receive the highest level of service, support and expertise" while positioning the business for future growth.

Dealer principal Gareth Jones says: "We're delighted to be appointed as the authorised Kia dealer for Whanganui. It has established itself as one of New Zealand's most innovative and respected automotive brands.

"This appointment represents an investment in the future of our business, and reinforces our commitment to providing exceptional products, service and support.

"The opportunity also allows us to expand into the electric and light-commercial market.

"Kia has a wide range of models including hybrid, plug-in hybrid and EVs. With the introduction of its electric van, we are eager to get started."

David Jones Motors is set to support customers' servicing needs from December 1. The new dealership's opening date has yet to be determined.



Ignition Motor Group in Whanganui and owner Ken Williams, inset



David Jones Motors will now represent Kia in Whanganui

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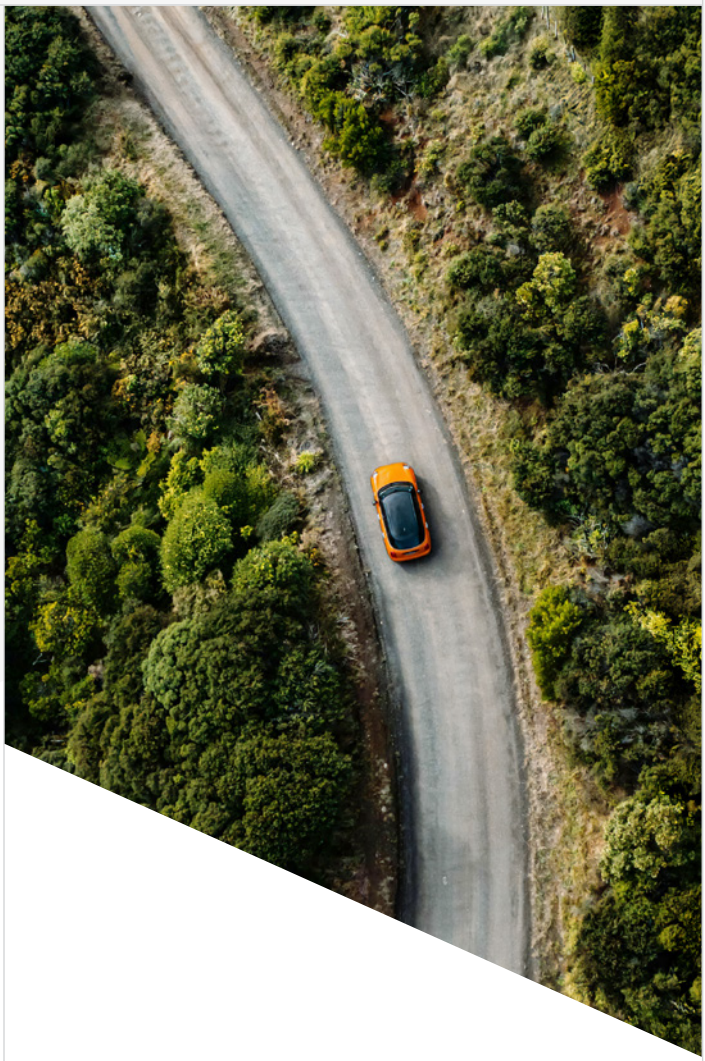
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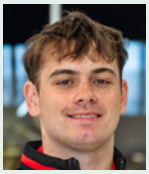
*Automated decisions are where applicable. Settled funds are released hourly, 9am–5pm, Monday to Friday. Information is correct as at 20 September 2026, based on average figures from the previous 90 days. 84% of applications had a personalised rate in less than 1 minute based on applications between 20 July and 20 September 2026.



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Industry movers



RYAN WOOD has been appointed as the first brand guardian for Gazoo Racing. The role has been created to build stronger connections between performance, community and driving culture.

The 22-year-old will share his personal journey with fans and enthusiasts, and draw on the progression that has defined his career in Supercars, the Bathurst 1000, GT World Challenge Australia, NZ Grand Prix and Bridgestone GR86 Championship.

Wood, who began racing in the Toyota 86 series, says: "This role is about more than a line-up of high-performance vehicles. It's more about the love of being a car enthusiast.

"I will be focused on bringing our growing community together through a love of driving, motorsport, owner experiences, track events, genuine performance parts and merchandise."



RICARDO BURANELLO has been promoted to chief executive officer of Teletrac Navman.

He has replaced Alain Samaha, who continued in the role until the end of September "to ensure a seamless transition".

Samaha will remain as a board member, and continues to support the company's long-term vision and strategic planning.

Buranello, pictured, previously held leadership roles at Telit Cinterion, Siemens and Totv. He has more than two decades of experience across telematics and high-growth technology businesses.

Having served as chief financial and operating officer since joining Teletrac Navman, Buranello has an in-depth knowledge of the business.

Under his leadership, Teletrac Navman will continue advancing its cloud-based, AI-powered connected mobility platform while building on growth, stability and customer focus.



DAVE RICHES has taken up the new role of general manager of Yoogo Fleet to bring the fleet lessor's sales and operations functions under a single leader.

Riches joined the Speirs Finance Group business around 18 months ago as general manager of operations and started in his expanded role on September 1.

He previously held senior roles at Auckland Council, Nib and Pinnacle Life.

His focus is on making fleet management simpler for customers. Riches says: "Data and digital solutions give fleet managers the visibility to identify where things could be working better, whether that's a vehicle due for servicing, a driver who may need support or a fleet that's larger than it needs to be."

GEOFF WILLIAMSON has been appointed as the NZTA's permanent head of vehicle regulation after acting in the role since February.

In his job, he will continue work to strengthen a modern and effective system maintaining strong safety outcomes for New Zealanders. Williamson is looking forward to leading the team and working with the industry "as we continue to improve the regulatory system together".

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



Used-vehicle group tees up partnership

Enterprise Motor Group (EMG) has become the official vehicle partner of the Professional Golfers' Association of New Zealand (PGANZ).

Its backing of the governing body is one of the largest sponsorship partnerships in the company's history and aims to help make golf accessible to all.


Jono Wu

The partnership puts a Mitsubishi Triton, Outlander and ASX to work across tournaments and coaching sessions nationwide.

The EMG-liveried vehicles support the PGANZ's calendar of professional and amateur events, connect professionals with golf communities and deliver added value for association members.

"Golf partnerships usually go to prestige brands like BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz," says Jono Wu, EMG's head of marketing. "That's the model everyone expects, but we are taking a different approach.

"At Enterprise, we're all about partnering with brands that help Kiwis create greater opportunities. That's why we're proud to partner with the PGA. It's an organisation that shares our values of people first, and being community driven and future focused.

"Golf isn't the members-only game people sometimes still picture. Through the PGANZ it reaches everyday communities and a lot of the same regions we operate in, such as Auckland, Hamilton and Gisborne."

Denver Dafoe, the PGANZ's operations manager, adds the deal is about more than a logo on a banner. "The vehicles are genuinely part of how we run things, from tournament support to getting people where they need to be.

"We consider ourselves the heartbeat of the game. We are passionate about every level from grassroots participation right through to our four members who are major winners. This partnership helps us grow the game at every one of those levels."

Over coming years, the PGANZ expects the partnership to deliver an enhanced Legends Pro-Am Series, stronger engagement between its members and EMG, and improved value for golfers nationwide.

Leadership team grows

Steve Fielding has become AutoSense's chief revenue officer as the fleet-safety provider deepens its work with Kiwi clients and expands in Australia.


Steve Fielding

He has more than two decades' experience in transport operations, fleet technology, software as a service and commercial leadership.

Most recently, he was executive general manager at logistics business Netlogix. Before that, he was with Eroad for almost five years.

In his new role, Fielding is leading AutoSense's commercial and growth strategy on both sides of the Tasman with a focus on existing clients here so they can access all the company's driver-safety offering.

Trust becomes shelf position

Last month's column introduced the invisible buyer with AI now shortlisting the options for a growing number of New Zealand car buyers, often before a salesperson hears from them at all.

Dealers who adapt to being chosen by a machine, rather than just being found by a person, already seem to be pulling ahead.

This month picks up the second half of that story – trust, attention and what can be done to earn it.

FAMILY & MATES COUNT

If a machine is effectively acting as the salesperson, it's worth asking whose machine.

Bain & Company found people trust a dealer's own AI three times more than a neutral third-party one when completing a purchase, much like a real buyer trusts a mate who knows cars over random online opinions.

The Edelman Trust Barometer found trust in friends and family sits at 84 per cent globally. Customer reviews come in at 68 per cent and advertising, the channel traders spend the most on, trails at some 50 per cent. The machine seems to read similar signals and a genuine review can outweigh a fair amount of ad spend.

Where a dealer advertises also seems to matter. An Australian survey of 1,500 people found premium media environments, such as quality news and trusted streaming, lifted purchase intent by 37 per cent and consideration around fourfold. Cluttered social feeds were often described as making premium brands feel less premium.



JAMES HENDRY
Director, sales and operations
AdTorque Edge NZ

Separate research by the University of Canberra put trust in news sources at 54 per cent against 21 per cent for social media.

There's a flow-on effect too. IAB Australia and Pureprofile found 59 per cent of AI shoppers trust a recommendation more when they've already seen the brand advertised elsewhere. Media may be quietly setting up the moment the machine recommends you.

In New Zealand, audio looks like one of the more underbought opportunities too. Radio, streaming and podcasts make up roughly 28 per cent of the time people spend on media yet attract only about six per cent of ad spend.

About 80 per cent of radio listening happens in the car and 55-71 per cent of Kiwis – depending on age range – listen to podcasts monthly. There may be a quieter opportunity in being the trusted voice people hear on the drive home while everyone else fights over the same crowded feed.

> **Media may be quietly setting up the moment the machine recommends you**

None of this is five separate problems. It looks more like one. The old model of renting attention month to month, then renting it again, seems to be breaking down.

The alternative is a connected, compounding system where each outcome, a call, test drive or service visit, feeds back in as a signal rather than disappearing into a separate report.

TRY OUT SOME MOVES

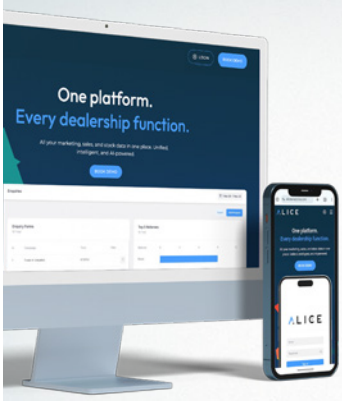
First, make yourself selectable. Try searching "best dealer for [your top model] near [your suburb]" in ChatGPT and Gemini. A wrong, blank or competitor-heavy result is basically a to-do list covering business listings, review volume and whether car pages give an AI enough to recommend you with confidence.

Second, try to stop the leak. Pick one customer journey this quarter and connect it end to end from first click through to test drive, sale and service as a single view of one buyer. If that's hard to see today, valuable information is likely slipping through daily.

Third, consider investing in integrated, automated reporting before investing more in crowded media channels. It can help to put cost per lead by channel next to gross per unit by source because the cheapest leads aren't always the most profitable.

There's one reassurance to close on. Capgemini's global survey of 12,000 people found 74 per cent now want human help during the buying process, up from 54 per cent a year earlier.

As machines get better at homework, the human moment seems to get rarer and more valuable with it. The machine may build the shortlist, but the human still earns the sale.



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Change constant in trader sector

If there's one word that sums up the dealer sector, it would have to be change and the industry has certainly had its fair share of it.

New rules have come, old ones have gone and goalposts moved again just when everyone had got their heads around things.

At times, you could probably be forgiven for wondering whether you were in the business of selling cars or studying for a degree in rules for outer-space commuting. There's never a dull moment in dealer land.

When I joined the Motor Trade Association (MTA) in 2022, the industry's landscape looked different from where we find ourselves today.

One of the biggest changes was the clean car programme. We had the clean car discount (CCD), which brought rebates, fees and emissions into everyday dealership conversations.

Then, just as everyone became reasonably fluent in explaining it to customers without needing a whiteboard and science degree, the CCD was repealed.

But don't panic, there are still plenty of acronyms to keep you on your toes.

We've seen significant changes in what New Zealanders are buying. For the two-year period after the rescinded CCD, you couldn't give an electric car away. Interest in BEVs and hybrids then skyrocketed, and PHEVs have powered on.

Once you could count on one hand the number of new makes or models arriving. Now you need to take off your socks to get to that number for just last month.

Added to this, some new entrants have grown so fast it feels like they have set land-speed records. Then throw in economic ups and downs, and dealers have been tap-dancing on hot coals.

There's been no shortage of challenges in the 2020s, yet the industry has stayed relevant. That's a testament to dealers' ability to adapt and change.

Then there's the gift that keeps on giving – access to the motor-vehicle register, which has kept me busy this year.

What at first glance looked like a straightforward process has morphed into anything but that.

Working with traders to navigate access requirements, terms and conditions, privacy obligations and everything surrounding them has consumed plenty of hours.



LARRY FALLOWFIELD
Sector manager – dealers, Motor Trade Association

Now there's another change coming. After four years, I've decided it's time to move on from my role and head back into the collision-repairer space.

I've genuinely enjoyed writing these articles for Autofile. I've met some fantastic people, enjoyed great banter and worked alongside a passionate MTA team while having the privilege of engaging with and representing members across sectors I respect.

> The dealer sector is full of characters, innovators and entrepreneurs

Hopefully over the past few years you have gained some industry insights and had a few laughs, or at least a smile or two, from what I've penned.

The dealer sector is full of characters, innovators and entrepreneurs along with people who simply love vehicles. It can be challenging, occasionally frustrating and sometimes head-scratching but never boring.

I also want to extend heartfelt thanks to the MTA's leadership team and board for their support.

They have kept the association relevant in today's busy world and continued to ensure decision-makers in Wellington understand it represents 4,000 members and how important the automotive sector is in keeping New Zealand moving forward.

A special thanks to the Autofile team for putting up with my ramblings over the years.

It's been a genuine pleasure, albeit at times the editor and I probably resembled Statler and Waldorf from The Muppets sitting in the stalls pondering the latest industry change.

We seemed to spend much of our time discussing the weather, battery ranges, new model launches, regulations and, of course, acronyms. Thanks again for the support, laughs and for giving me a platform to share my thoughts.

As I drive off into my next chapter, I'm grateful for the journey, pleased to report I'm still running smoothly and haven't failed my warrant of fitness.

While I'm hitting the gas pedal out of here, I am taking with me some great memories, friendships and, without doubt, a continued interest in what happens next in dealer land – albeit from the passenger's seat.

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The month that was... November

November 2004

CCI rebates – all a bit messy?



Legislation signed by the Governor-General on August 9, 2004, which would come into force on April 1, 2005, intended to provide extra protection to Kiwis when finance companies sold them consumer credit insurance (CCI).

It aimed to do that in three main ways. The first was by shifting responsibility away from the customer, who might have had to ask for a rebate following early loan settlement. In future, the financier would have to furnish it every time.

The second was moving responsibility from the insurer to the lender for providing the rebated CCI premiums. The third was prescribing a rebate formula that mirrored Australia's.

The act's insurance rebating provisions and regulations applied only to CCI financed under consumer credit contracts.

They weren't valid with related products, such as warranties, guaranteed asset protection or motor insurance, and were applied only when the financier "arranged" the CCI.

Like so much legislation, the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act 2003 and its regulations were messy and full of holes.

November 25, 2005

No progress



The question of whether to use year of manufacture (YoM) or date of first registration (DoFR) as an indicator of the age of a vehicle continued to confound the industry.

Land Transport NZ confirmed it had met with associations to canvass their views, but no decision had been made on how to proceed.

Media manager Andy Knackstedt said the agency would discuss the issue further with the industry before introducing any changes.

"This isn't a new issue," he added. "It has been looked at previously and will continue to be looked at when initiatives such as emissions controls are progressed and in the current review of the Motor Vehicle Sales Act."

Three industry organisations were united in recommending DoFR as appropriate because it indicated when a car began its useful life.

However, at the request of the Ministry of Transport (MoT), new-vehicle importers began using YoM in February 2005 under the condition that used-vehicle importers would soon be doing the same.

This change was delayed after it proved more difficult than initially expected, leaving the Motor Industry Association concerned the two sectors weren't competing on a level playing field.

November 21, 2008

3 million jobs could go in US



Autofile looked at the crisis in America that had left at least one, if not all three, of the big carmakers – General Motors, Ford and Chrysler – in major financial trouble.

If any were to "go", it would be cataclysmic for the US economy with three million jobs lost in the first year, personal income reduced by $150 billion and a government tax loss of more than $156b over three years, not to mention the broader blow to consumer and business confidence.

However, Washington seemed less likely to agree to a bail out, stating it was the companies' fault for getting into a situation like that.

But what would it mean for New Zealand? On the whole, our car industry didn't wish to comment on the situation given the wide range of potential consequences to not just the Big Three, but other brands and the international line-up of supply companies.

One industry insider said the thought of one or more of those manufacturers going under was mind-boggling and he was still trying to fathom the sheer size of the situation. "We're not talking about millions of dollars, we're talking billions if not approaching trillions."

November 16, 2014

ITS problem focus of joint delegation



A delegation representing the imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (IMVIA) and MoT was in Japan. It was looking for a solution to problems relating to the radio frequency Japan proposed to base its intelligent transport systems (ITS) infrastructure on.

IMVIA policy adviser Kit Wilkerson and Iain McGlinchy, the MoT's principal adviser, were meeting with government officials, car manufacturers and industry members to research future situations centred around Japan's use of the 760 megahertz (MHz) frequency.

That frequency was unavailable in New Zealand because it was already being used by the telecommunications industry and it was against law in this country for anyone else to operate on it.

There was the potential for imports to arrive here with 760MHz technology embedded, making those vehicles illegal to be sold and operated here.

Wilkerson said the focus of the trip was to find out more about Japanese plans for the frequency, and to educate government and industry people about the problems it could cause for Japan's car exports.

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MORE THAN JUST A MAGAZINE

Regulate to reduce emissions

I've been thinking about how we regulate carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions and whether we're making a fairly basic mistake when it comes to used imports.

We tend to treat new and used vehicles as essentially the same thing. They both burn fuel and create pollution, so it seems reasonable to apply similar emissions rules.

But there's a fundamental difference we're overlooking. A new vehicle is something being added to the global fleet while a used one already exists.

When governments set emissions standards for new vehicles, they are signalling to manufacturers to build cleaner vehicles, supply more hybrids and EVs, and improve technology going into future production.

That's where regulation should be ambitious.

Cars being built today will become used vehicles New Zealanders buy 10 years from now. We have every reason to push for the cleanest possible new models.

By the time a car reaches the international used market, its engine, hybrid system and emissions performance are largely fixed. An importer cannot change any of that. What we can change is where that vehicle goes and who gets to use it.

The used-car sector is mainly in the business of finding existing cars and matching them to people who need them.

A Japanese family might decide to replace its 10-year-old hybrid, which still has years of useful life remaining, and a Kiwi household might need that exact vehicle but cannot afford a new one. Our job is to connect those two markets.



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

Suppose our government decides a car produces too much CO_2 and refuses to let it enter the country. What happens? It doesn't disappear but goes back into the international market where other buyers can compete for it.

Its price may fall until another purchaser finds it attractive. We haven't stopped that vehicle existing. We've simply stopped a New Zealander from buying it.

A tonne of CO_2 emitted in Japan has the same effect on the climate as a tonne emitted in New Zealand, so not bringing a vehicle here doesn't, by itself, reduce global emissions.

What happens to the Kiwi buyer? When someone shopping for a new vehicle cannot buy their preferred model, they can often choose a different new model.

But people shopping for a $15,000 used car generally cannot just decide to buy a $50,000 EV instead. Their alternative is often what they're already driving.

If affordable replacements are harder to obtain, people keep their existing vehicles longer.

An older car that might have been previously scrapped suddenly becomes worth repairing.

As replacements become more expensive, increasingly costly repairs start making financial sense. We could be slowing the very process that brings cleaner and safer vehicles into everyday use.

This country provides an interesting example. According to NZTA statistics for July 2025, new imports averaged 168g of CO_2 per kilometre while used imports averaged 130g. That's about 23 per cent lower emissions for used imports despite those vehicles being considerably older.

That's because we're buying from different markets. Japan has a strong market for smaller, efficient cars and hybrids. New vehicles supplied here include a different mix with larger models. Being newer doesn't automatically mean lower emissions.

The important comparison isn't necessarily between new cars and used imports. It's between the latter and whatever the consumer would otherwise continue driving.

We're looking at the wrong measurement. New Zealand's actual transport CO_2 emissions are primarily driven by how much fuel we burn.

That depends on how efficient our vehicles are, how far we drive them and which cars remain in service. It isn't determined simply by the CO_2 ratings of what's crossing our border.

The government could restrict imports until every incoming vehicle was an EV and report a fantastic result. But if those restrictions made replacements unaffordable, we could end up with an ageing fleet of petrol and diesel cars staying on the road for much longer. The import statistics would look wonderful, even if actual emissions didn't improve.

So where should we focus? If reducing global emissions is the objective, I think we need to concentrate on three things.

First, reduce the amount of fuel consumed through transport. Second, ensure new vehicles being made are substantially cleaner than they otherwise would have been. Third, encourage the oldest, least-efficient cars to exit the fleet.

The international used-vehicle trade can help with that third objective by making newer, more efficient replacements affordable.

That doesn't mean every used import is beneficial or that emissions should be ignored when choosing which vehicles enter service.

We should be encouraging importers to find the cleanest models New Zealanders can afford in each segment, but there's a big difference between encouraging greener choices and making replacements unaffordable.

Before applying emissions restrictions to used vehicles, governments should be able to explain how those restrictions reduce global CO_2, including what happens to cars excluded and the older models that might have been replaced.

The ultimate goal isn't to make our import statistics look cleaner. It's to make the vehicles people drive greener and those aren't necessarily the same thing.

VIA
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Van targets switch for fleets

Ford's all-new Transit City is going on sale here from January for $58,990 plus on-road costs.

The fully electric van takes a focused, engineering-led approach to help fleets transition to zero-emissions transport, according to the marque.

Designed for metropolitan areas, the Transit City bypasses lengthy option lists in favour of a single, well-equipped specification to cut ordering complexity, minimise operational downtime and reduce the total cost of ownership.

"It represents a new way of thinking about commercials for businesses," says Annaliese Atina, managing director of Ford NZ.

"We know urban operators need a van that's affordable, capable and ready to work from day one, and that's what it delivers."

The Transit City's compact footprint houses a load compartment of 6.4 cubic metres and delivers a maximum payload capacity of up to 1,085kg "without compromise".

To determine the ideal battery capacity, Ford's engineers analysed telematics data from more than 2,000 Transit Customs in real-world conditions. The findings revealed typical urban trips average 76km with 90 per cent of routes being 200km or less.

The Transit City comes with a 56kWh lithium-iron phosphate (LFP) battery paired with a 110kW front-wheel-drive e-motor.

LFP was selected for its superior thermal durability, long cycle life and resistance to degradation under frequent DC charging when compared with other common EV battery types. The powertrain delivers a maximum of 254km WLTP combined range and up to 380km in the city.



The battery-electric Transit City







Chassis engineers fine-tuned the one-pedal driving calibration to maximise regenerative energy recovery and limit driver fatigue in congestion.

The van's battery can be boosted from 10-80 per cent in about 33 minutes via 87kW DC charging and up to 68km can be added in 10 minutes. As for 11kW AC charging, 10-100 per cent takes about five-and-a-half hours.

By eliminating internal-combustion components, such as turbos, fuel-injection systems and multi-speed gearboxes, Ford projects scheduled maintenance costs will drop compared to an equivalent diesel model thanks, in part, to one-year or 30,000km service intervals.

The Transit City includes a high-efficiency heated driver's seat which, on its own, saves battery power compared to cabin-wide heating. It has a keyless push-button start while in-cab connectivity is managed through a 12.3-inch central touchscreen featuring wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

"The shift to electric doesn't have to be complicated," says Atina. "The Transit City gives businesses a straightforward van that's ready to work. The total cost of ownership makes a compelling case for fleets looking to make the switch."

The van was confirmed for New Zealand at Ford Uncovered, a major media and dealer event in Melbourne. It was also revealed the Bronco Basecamp, an adventure model powered by the company's first super-hybrid extended-range electrified powertrain, will arrive here in the second half of next year.

The SUV pairs dual-motor electric driving powered by a 49kWh battery with a 1.5-litre turbocharged petrol engine that acts as an on-board range extender.

This set-up delivers the responsive driving dynamics of an EV and a combined estimated range of 800-900km.

When parked, the vehicle can be used as an off-grid power station.

Boasting up to 6.6kW of Pro Power Onboard, owners can run induction cooktops, high-end photography gear and camp lights directly from the car's battery.

The aim is for the Bronco to accelerate the blue oval's presence in the fast-growing electrified SUV segment.

The company wants to double its coverage of New Zealand's vehicle market and refresh two-thirds of its existing line-up within three years to give customers "more choice and stronger support, no matter what they drive a Ford for".

Atina adds that strength is the platform for bigger goals. "Today, we only play in around 30 per cent of the market. Our ambition is to double that to more than 60 per cent in three years.

"Ford also aims for more than 90 per cent of its volume sold to be all-new or significantly refreshed by the end of 2030. We'll do this by broadening our portfolio and bringing in more zero and low-emissions vehicles.

"What makes us different is choice backed by a brand and trusted dealer network.

"Customers deserve the peace of mind of a local legacy, global footprint and one of the country's largest service networks."


Ford's Bronco Basecamp

Extra power across all grades

The starting price in New Zealand for Nissan's all-new Patrol with its four-grade range is $120,990.

At just $2,000 more than the outgoing Y62 Patrol, all Y63 variants boast a "substantial" boost in standard kit, a more powerful engine and braked-towing capacity of 3,700kg.

The line-up also features a more rigid chassis, advanced suspension systems and upgraded in-cabin technology, such as a Klipsch premium audio, and Google built-in.

The Ti starts at $120,990 plus on-road costs. Next up is the Ti-L from $136,490, the off-road-focused PRO-4X at $145,990 and range-topping Ti-L Reserve from $150,490. First customer deliveries are expected early next year.

The Patrol's 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 is paired with a nine-speed automatic transmission to deliver 317kW of power and 700Nm of torque.


The Y63 Patrol

The powertrain delivers 19kW more power, sharper response and 140Nm more torque than its predecessor. Peak torque is available earlier in the rev range for stronger performance across everyday driving, towing and off-road conditions.

The V6 also incorporates a scavenger oil pump to maintain consistent engine lubrication during extreme off-roading, including steep inclines and off-camber terrain.

The full-time four-wheel drive has an interlocking high and low transfer case, an electronic locking rear differential, and eight drive and terrain modes.

There's a widescreen monolith display, invisible hood "skeleton view", and three rows of seats with space for eight adults.

The Patrol is built on an all-new ladder frame that offers 40 per cent more torsional rigidity than its predecessor with multi-link independent suspension and electric power steering.

The Ti-L grade introduces intelligent dynamic damping e-damper suspension, which continuously adjusts damping to conditions.

The Ti-L Reserve and PRO-4X add adaptive air suspension paired with intelligent dynamic damping.

This allows the ride height to be raised off-road to improve approach, breakover and departure angles, and lowered when the SUV is shifted into park for easier entry, exit and cargo loading.

On the highway, adaptive air suspension lowers automatically at speeds in excess of 90kph and then raises again below 70kph to support fuel economy and cruising comfort.


The CX-6e Takami

One-variant range

Mazda's new all-electric SUV will be priced from $58,990 plus on-road costs, which is the same as its 6e sedan stablemate.

The CX-6e is coming to New Zealand as a single variant, the Takami, and will boast a WLTP range of up to 468km.

The SUV has a 78kWh lithium-iron phosphate battery, which powers an electric motor on the rear axle. It produces 190kW of power and 290Nm of torque.

It can be replenished at up to 195kW using a DC fast-charger with 10-80 per cent taking about 24 minutes. As for AC, it is rated to 11kW so around eight hours is needed to get to full using a wallbox.

The CX-6e is a fair bit bigger than the CX-5 at 1,935mm wide and 4,850mm long.

It has a lower roofline at 1,620mm and a slightly smaller boot at 363 litres, but comes with an 83l frunk under the bonnet.

Its 26-inch display, which can be operated by the passenger and driver, stretches across the dashboard, and a black or white leather interior will be available in New Zealand.

Brand's 'exciting refresh'

Volkswagen has launched its all-new T-Roc, which introduces the brand's first mild hybrid powertrain to the Kiwi market.

With combined fuel consumption of 5.6l/100km and carbon-dioxide emissions of 126g/km, the compact SUV boasts a multi-link rear suspension, and enhanced ride comfort and control.

The Life variant starts at $53,990 plus on-roads and the R-Line Launch Edition is priced from $65,490.

"The T-Roc represents an exciting refresh to our SUV range, completing the line-up with a confident and considered point of entry," says Chanelle McDonald, general manager of Volkswagen NZ.

The SUV's illuminated front-grille detailing and logo "create a confident presence day and night".

The R-Line Launch Edition boasts leather-appointed sports seats, heated sports steering wheel, 30-colour ambient lighting and a panoramic digital experience centred around its 12.9-inch infotainment system.

Advanced safety and driver-assistance systems are standard across the range. These include front assist with pedestrian and cyclist monitoring, adaptive cruise control, blind-spot monitoring, rear cross-traffic alert and dynamic road-sign display.



The R-Line Launch Edition

Tribute to our motorsport writer

It's no exaggeration to describe Mark Baker as a legend among fellow journalists and drivers on the motorsport scene.

Lasting legacies are borne from what people bring to our lives.

In Mark's case, that was kindness, generosity, humility, and using his razor-sharp humour and big laugh to warm the cockles of many a cynical journo's heart.

Team members at Autofile were devastated to receive news of the heart attack that took his life at home in Papakura, south Auckland, on October 15.

For a decade, he reported on motor racing in this country and Kiwis' exploits overseas in this magazine.

"Mark was one of the most caring people I've met during my 35 years as a journalist," says Darren Risby, editor of Autofile.

"We shared many stories of derring-do from our lives and he certainly enriched mine. If laughter was a medicine, he was a tonic.

"He was also fearsomely strong. After suffering a stroke a few years ago, Mark confounded his medical team by making an almost full recovery. Times of adversity often define who we are and his indefatigable spirit shone through.

"Our condolences go to his wife Dot and daughter Caitlin, whom he adored, brother Gary, who he raced with back in the day, and family. At the age of 65, he was a colleague and friend who has left us too soon. Rest easy, mate."

In addition to Autofile and running his own company, Mark had been editor of NZ4WD magazine for about six years when he passed.

A celebration of his life was held in Papakura on October 24 followed by social time at The Good Home, Takanini.

Mark, an avid reader and lover of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, made something clear – "no black, sombre clothing" – and he provided shots of whisky to toast him on his way.



UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

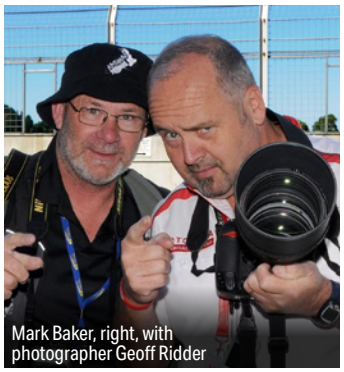
Mark was born and lived with his family in Pahiatua near Palmerston North until he was six when they moved to Kawerau. After college, he read social sciences at the University of Waikato.

He had a massive music collection with one of his favourite bands being Australian outfit Hunters & Collectors, while his bread and butter for more than two decades was automotive PR and communications. For longer than that he was a motorsport journalist, photographer and competitor.

His early memories included races at Ohakea near Bulls in the early 1960s, and watching ShellSport racers and Mini 7s at Bay Park, Mount Maunganui.

Mark went on winter sorties into forests around Kawerau and Rotorua to see the likes of Russell Brookes, Ari Vatanen and Mike Marshall plying their trade in Group 4 Escorts.

Together with Murray Taylor Racing and TV producer Dave Hedge, he helped build the Toyota Racing Series (TRS) into a globally recognised brand under category managers Barrie and Louise Thomlinson.


Mark Baker, right, with photographer Geoff Ridder

Grant McDonald, of SpeedSport, knew Mark from years ago. He says: "Mark was one of the earliest contributors to the magazine. I knew him before then. When I was the drive announcer at 1XX Whakatane around 1979-80, he approached me to do a promotion with rally driver Lee England.

"I recorded an interview while we blasted through Kawerau Forest in Lee's Datsun. Mark was contributing at the time to his local newspaper the Kawerau Gazette.

"I co-drove for Mark in a Maramarua club rally, but the Datsun slid into a ditch and hit a hidden tree stump, which launched the car into the air and into a roll. It ended upside down on the road.

"His best talent was with pen and paper or typewriter.

"By the time SpeedSport started publishing in January 1990, Mark and his brother were heavily involved with off-roading.

"From issue five, in July 1990, Mark wrote regular off-road stories. His final report was in our second-to-last issue, number 238 in June 2010, some 20 years later.

"Thank you Mark for your work and friendship."

Cathy Parker, owner of Adrenaline Publishing, says Mark, editor of NZ4WD, also wrote content for sister magazine Motor Equipment News.

"Mark originally supplied off-road racing content for NZ4WD and then moved into the editor's role. He had an extensive career in motoring and motor-racing PR including with Murray Taylor Racing, BMW New Zealand, Castrol NZ and many more.

"He also had extensive involvement in the off-road scene and will be sadly missed."

The team at Toyota NZ adds: "Mark was a familiar face over the years, most recently joining us for the Hilux and GR media launches this year. His knowledge of the industry, passion for motoring and friendly presence will be greatly missed."

SUCCESSFUL CAREER

Mark started his own company, Veritas Communications, in 2000. He was a "specialist of many things" with his clients coming from many different sectors.

He was a consultant for BMW Group NZ from 2000-06, and was responsible for media liaison and strategy, communications, publications and website content.

From 2007 to October 2018, he was a media consultant for the TRS and TR86. His job included social-media campaigns, television liaison coverage and radio "voice" reports.

For four years until 2010, Mark headed up communications at Papakura District Council. He often preferred to meet up in a nearby cafe instead of council offices so everyone could partake of donuts.

Kiwi eliminated from finals

Ryan Wood has lost out on a Supercars Championship semi-final spot to Anton de Pasquale in a tense conclusion to the Boost Mobile Gold Coast 500 finale.

The New Zealander appeared set to claim the last available place for Sandown after Walkinshaw TWG Racing orchestrated Chaz Mostert to slot in behind him.

It denied Mostert a shot at a fourth straight win at Surfers Paradise but offered Wood the chance to qualify for the semi-final.

Mostert passed Wood on the last lap to take the final spot on the podium. Wood, Kai Allen and Jack Le Brocq were eliminated, with De Pasquale hanging on to progress to the semis.

Wood was unable to drop Mostert behind with Andre Heimgartner and Erebus Motorsport rookie Jarrod Hughes bearing down on the number two Mobil 1 Truck Assist Supra.

Hughes and PremiAir Racing's Cooper Murray stopped in the closing laps to aid the hopes of De Pasquale, who started 21st and copped a lap-one puncture.

Mostert hounded Wood for the final podium spot in the closing laps as eventual winner Broc Feeney and Brodie Kostecki blazed away up the road. "Proud of you guys, sorry I couldn't get it done," Wood radioed to his team after the finish.

Fellow New Zealander Matthew Payne followed third in the weekend's first race with sixth in the second. He retained top spot on the drivers' ladder after Surfers Paradise with Feeney on his tail.

Meanwhile, Kostecki has revealed the instant emotions triggered by a wild climax at the Bathurst 1000 earlier last month. He passed De Pasquale on the final lap after the latter ran out of fuel.



Ryan Wood in action at the Gold Coast 500

Kostecki, who fought back after an earlier brake-stop disaster, rounded up De Pasquale on Mountain Straight and, as he was tackling Griffins Bend, welled up inside his helmet.

In the face of the setting sun, Kostecki said he almost threw it away before sealing what he labelled the "best race win and career moment I've ever had".

The live broadcast cut to scenes in the pits for DJR and Matt Stone Racing as Kostecki rounded The Cutting before picking the number 17 Ford Mustang back up as he was approaching Reid Park.

"As soon as I got by him, I almost crashed because I had this euphoria of emotions over me," added Kostecki. "We were leading the race by 20 seconds. Then we had the [slow] pit stop. I went into this mode of, 'I'm going to catch these cars in front'. I was trying not to cry on the last lap. It was a crazy finish."

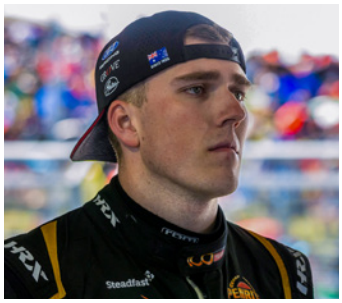
A post-race investigation by Team 18 identified an issue with its fuel-strategy software, which cost De Pasquale victory.

He had a comfortable lead in the final stint but questions emerged on fuel levels as the laps wound down. Not even a late safety vehicle could quell concerns.

His car ran out of fuel on the final lap. De Pasquale was disconsolate with team principal Adrian Burgess and owner Charlie Schwerkolt also fronting the media post-race.

The team later released a statement on behalf of Schwerkolt, who explained the issue led to the final fuel fill "being less than the amount required to finish the race" and the problem had been resolved.

"This was a team responsibility. No individual is to blame and no one is being relieved of their position. The team has evolved over the years with new personnel, a new driver line-up, and improvements in processes and operations. We win and lose as a team. We will learn and grow."





Matthew Payne came home third and sixth at Surfers Paradise

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Commercial's gross vehicle mass of 3,500kg makes it too heavy for tribunal's jurisdiction

The case: The adjudicator had to rule whether she was legally permitted to hear a claim involving the rejection of an LDV eDeliver 9 with a gross vehicle mass (GVM) of 3,500kg. The buyer said the adjudicator had jurisdiction in this matter because the van was classed as a light motor vehicle.

The decision: The tribunal asked for written submissions from both parties because the matter was a question of law. The application was kicked out.

At: Hearing on papers at the Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal.

Background

Glenn Clarkson purchased a 2023 LDV eDeliver 9 for $81,480 from Manawatu SsangYong & LDV on June 23, 2023. Relevantly in this case, the manufacturer's specified gross vehicle mass (GVM) for the vehicle was 3,500kg.

By minute dated October 30, 2025, the adjudicator advised the parties that the weight raised a threshold question as to whether it had jurisdiction to hear and determine a claim involving a vehicle with a GVM of exactly 3.500kg.

As set out in the minute, the tribunal might determine a proceeding on the papers – that was, without a formal hearing – if considered appropriate.

Before doing so, the adjudicator had to give the parties reasonable opportunity to comment on whether the matter should be heard in this way.

The evidence

The tribunal is governed by the Motor Vehicle Sales Act (MVSA). Under section 89, it only has jurisdiction in respect of vehicles sold as defined in section six. This definition excludes any model declared by the Governor-General by order in council not to be a vehicle for the act's purposes.

The Motor Vehicle Dealers Act (MVDA) was scrapped in 2003 and replaced by the MVSA. Before the MVDA was repealed, the Motor Vehicle Dealers (Exclusion of Heavy Vehicles) Order was enacted. It excludes models with a GVM of 3,500kg or more from the definition of a vehicle for the MVSA. When the MVDA was repealed, the order remained in force.

The Heavy Motor Vehicle Regulations (HMVR) made under the then Transport Act define a heavy vehicle as having a GVM exceeding 3,500kg, thereby creating an apparent inconsistency between the order and HMVR.

Clarkson, who wanted to reject the van, and the trader filed submissions outlining their positions on this case. The latter consented to the matter being heard on the papers. The buyer submitted the matter didn't need to be heard in this way because "it's very clear to me the tribunal does have jurisdiction".

The adjudicator considered the jurisdiction issue could be heard on the papers because it was a preliminary question of law involving no disputed facts.

In summary, Clarkson said the order had no effect because the MVDA was repealed and his van wasn't heavy under the HMVR.

Industry practice recognises the HMVR's definition of a heavy vehicle. The Land Transport Act (LTA) also defines such a vehicle as having a GVM exceeding 3,500kg and a light model as one with a GVM of not more than 3,500kg.

Manufacturers often rate vans at 3,500kg because that's the maximum permitted for a light vehicle under the LTA. Models at that weight are treated as light for registration, warrants of fitness and road-user charges.

Clarkson said common sense and transport legislation treat 3,500kg models as light, and the tribunal should do the same. The trader submitted the order in council continued to apply despite the MVDA's repeal.

The HMVR was irrelevant as its regulations were never incorporated into section six of the MVSA as part of the definition or exclusions for vehicles. If parliament had intended the HMVR to govern the MVSA definition, it would have referred to them when enacting the act. It did not.

Instead, parliament included reference to orders in council, so the order applied with the tribunal's jurisdiction limited to vehicles weighing less than 3,500kg.

The finding

As the tribunal's jurisdiction starts under the MVSA's section six, which defines "motor vehicle" for its purposes, the definition excludes those "of any other class or description declared by the Governor-General, by order in council, not to be a motor vehicle for the purposes of this act".

The order was captured by section six. It excludes "heavy motor vehicles having a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight of 3,500kg or more". On its plain wording, it includes vehicles weighing exactly 3,500kg.

Although the MVDA was repealed when the MVSA came into force, the order wasn't. Section 36 of the Legislation Act confirms subordinate laws made under a repealed act, such as the order, remain in force unless repealed.

Clarkson relied on the HMVR and the LTA. While those definitions apply for transport and compliance purposes, they don't govern the MVSA.

The tribunal acknowledged the apparent inconsistency between the order, HMVR and LTA. However, the adjudicator had to apply ordinary principles of statutory interpretation.

The order was incorporated into the MVSA and must be read according to its plain wording.

Parliament could have aligned the definition of a vehicle in the MVSA with definitions in transport law when it repealed the MVDA and replaced it with the MVSA.

Instead, it incorporated orders in council into section six. That signalled to the tribunal the order determined the scope of its jurisdiction under the MVSA.

Because the order was made under the MVDA, it carries the greatest persuasive weight when determining what constitutes a "heavy vehicle".

When interpreting the meaning of "heavy vehicle" in the MVDA and MVSA, the order was the more context-appropriate instrument because it gave effect to the acts' purposes rather than the HMVR.

Order

The application was dismissed.



A 2023 LDV eDeliver 9

Seller initially describes transaction as private before accepting he was small-scale dealer

The case: The buyer rejected his 2007 BMW 118i after its engine failed two days after purchase and needed to be replaced. The trader said the car had been serviced prior to purchase. It added the buyer had inspected and test-driven the vehicle before buying so it wasn't liable for the problem.

The decision: The dealer was ordered to refund the $4,000 sticker price and the repairer's inspection fee of $300 before collecting the BMW.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal via video link.

Background



A 2007 BMW 118i

Kelby Wohlers bought a 2007 BMW 118i with an odometer reading of 101,529km from Mangala Dewayalage for $4,000 on May 3, 2026. Its engine failed days after purchase and after less than 50km of driving.

The buyer had Prime Auto Centre inspect the car on May 15.

It found the timing chain was severely stretched and jumping on the intake camshaft, the timing between the intake and exhaust camshafts was out of alignment, cylinder four was leaking severely and with compression too low to measure properly and there was severe valve damage to the pistons in all cylinders.

Prime Auto Centre recommended a full engine replacement and the inspection cost Wohlers $300.

The consumer rejected the BMW under the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA) on May 20. He sought a refund of its purchase price, the cost of the inspection and the tribunal's filing fee.

Dewayalage initially maintained the sale was private, but during the hearing he accepted he was a small-scale car dealer and the vehicle had mechanical issues.

He submitted in writing that he didn't know of any defect when he sold the BMW and he briefly owned it. He added Wohlers inspected and test drove the BMW prior to purchase, and it was unfair he could be liable for the engine failure given the vehicle's age, price and mileage.

The evidence

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

Before the tribunal considered what faults this BMW had, it began by noting usual civil-law standards and expectations apply, so it was up to Wohlers to establish his claims on the balance of probabilities.

Independent witnesses, corroborating documents, reports and photographs can be an important part of discharging the burden of proof. Ultimately, it's for the applicant to decide what evidence to put before the adjudicator.

The tribunal's mechanical assessor said a timing chain stretches over an extended period of use and that a chain in this car's condition would have been at or near the point of failure at purchase.

That was consistent with the opinion Prime Auto Centre supplied on June 16, which was damage of that kind couldn't reasonably have developed within less than 50km of ordinary driving and the BMW was sold in a mechanically compromised condition.

Dewayalage didn't dispute the technical evidence. His evidence was the BMW was running normally and had recently been serviced when he sold it.

The dealer said Wohlers test drove the BMW before buying it and his use of diagnostic scanning equipment showed some familiarity with assessing a vehicle's condition. He disputed that he knowingly sold a defective car or misrepresented it.

The finding

The tribunal accepted Dewayalage didn't know about the defect, had concealed nothing from Wohlers and acted in good faith.

But that didn't answer the claim. The CGA's statutory guarantees concern the condition of goods at the time of supply and, therefore, are not knowledge or fault-based.

A reasonable buyer would need to have realistic expectations as to the quality and durability of a 19-year-old European hatchback that had travelled more than 101,000km and cost $4,000.

As such, a consumer should expect wear and tear consistent with that age and mileage, and expect it to require ongoing maintenance and repair.

A supplier's obligations under section six of the CGA are finite, and at some point the risk of the vehicle developing defects transfers from the supplier to the purchaser.

This BMW failed within about 50km of ordinary driving and two days after it was bought. It couldn't be economically repaired.

Whatever else a reasonable person purchasing a cheap, old, high-mileage car would accept, that consumer would expect to be able to drive it.

The description in the trader's advertisement of a "reliable hatchback" that "drives beautifully with no warning lights, no unusual noises" only reinforced that expectation.

The tribunal found the BMW was neither fit for the purpose for which vehicles of its type were commonly supplied and wasn't durable. It departed in a significant respect from the standard a reasonable consumer would regard as acceptable.

Therefore, it was not of acceptable quality and the guarantee in section six of the CGA had been breached, and the tribunal found the engine defect was present in the BMW when it was supplied to Wohlers.

The adjudicator also said no reasonable consumer, who was fully acquainted with the nature and extent of this failure, would have bought this vehicle for $4,000.

The engine failure was of a substantial character, meaning Wohlers was entitled to reject the BMW and under section 23 of the CGA was entitled to a refund of the $4,000 purchase price.

The $300 Wohlers paid Prime Auto Centre was a loss resulting from the failure and it was reasonably foreseeable.

Having the BMW diagnosed by a repairer was a reasonable and necessary step before rejecting it and that sum was recoverable under section 18 of the CGA.

Orders

Dewayalage had to pay Wohlers $4,300 and collect the BMW. However, the tribunal dismissed the buyer's claim for the hearing's filing fee.

Right to repair gets traction

Labour is promising to support right-to-repair legislation across the automotive industry.

The move would force original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to provide independent mechanics access to the same manuals, software and tools to fix cars that franchised dealerships receive.

Arena Williams, Labour's consumer affairs spokesperson, announced the policy at Midas Manukau in south Auckland last month.



From left, Labour's Arena Williams, Avi Prasad, owner of Midas Manukau, Jason Wilson, chief executive of Midas NZ, Labour leader Chris Hipkins and Chris Ring, managing director of Pit Stop

Details of the pledge before the general election came hours after October's Autofile went to press. That issue of the magazine reported leaders in the repair and used-imports sectors are campaigning for rules to make technical information from OEMs widely available.

Williams says: "Modern cars are computers on wheels, but too often local mechanics can't access the data and software to fix them.

"One mechanic has told me he spent $600 on the codes and repair information to repair one. That's ridiculous.

"When a skilled mechanic in a south Auckland workshop can completely fix a car but cannot turn off the light on the dashboard that tells you there's a problem needing a fix, then there's a problem with the design of the system."

Williams points out Australia has introduced right-to-repair legislation to ensure fair access to information and tools independent businesses need to compete with franchised dealerships.

She adds: "Independent mechanics there are on average 25 per cent cheaper than dealerships and their scheme has increased revenue for independent repairers by around A$2.5 billion [NZ$3.1b].

"We think it might have an even bigger difference here because we have a more complicated fleet in New Zealand because of second-hand imports."

The politician also cites a survey carried out in 2023 by the NZ Choice of Repairer Industry Leaders Group, which found 80 per cent of independent workshop owners turn away work because they cannot access the information they need.

Williams notes a number of mechanics have helped her develop the details of Labour's right-to-repair policy over the past two years.

She says the proposal would give local businesses what they need to win more customers by providing extra competition and choice across the automotive market.

Under Labour's plan, the Commerce Commission would be responsible for ensuring carmakers comply with right-to-repair rules, including preventing OEMs from charging independent repairers unfair fees for access.

The party adds the policy would be particularly beneficial in regional areas where an independent mechanic may be the only local repair option.

Inspections overhauled

November 1 was when the first tranche of changes to in-service testing kicked in.

There are now fewer inspections of light vehicles "at lower risk of crashes" with new frequencies when warrants of fitness (WOFs) expire. Those for new cars and motorbikes have been pushed out from three to four years after first registration.

Light vehicles aged four to 14 need to have a WOF every two years instead of 12 months. This change applies now for those first registered on or after November 1, 2019, and from November next year for registrations between November 2013 and October 2019.

Motorbikes first registered before January 2000 have shifted from six-monthly to annual WOFs. Those registered from January 1, 2000, are unchanged at 12-monthly. Certificates of fitness for light rentals have moved to annual from every six months.

The checklist for light vehicles now includes warning indicators for advanced driver-assistance systems. Owners need them to be operational to pass.

The infringement fee for a WOF expired by more than two months has risen from $200 to $350. For unsafe wheels or tyres, the fee has increased from $150 to $350 and a court can impose a fine of up to $1,000.

Scholarships launch

Applications are open for the Inspiring Futures Foundation's scholarships presented by MITO.

Up to $350,000 will be awarded to people looking to expand their skills across a range of trades.

"We are seeing demand for trade professionals bucking the overall employment trend and our new enrolments are up 30 per cent year on year, so funding training for people is a win for individuals and employers," says Verna Niao, MITO's chief executive.

"In particular, our KickStart scholarship category for new entrants to our industries means there has never been a better time to take on a young learner."

The Inspiring Futures Foundation, which funds the programme, is equally committed to providing opportunities for training in trades.

Trust convener Louise Sixton says: "Whether it's leadership education through Harvard University or the first year of training for an automotive technician, these scholarships make a real difference to people's careers."

The 21 scholarship categories cover the first-year training fees of apprenticeships, advanced technical programmes and business management courses.

Applications close on December 11. Visit mito.nz/scholarships to find out more.

AROUND THE COUNTRY

October 2026

Total new cars

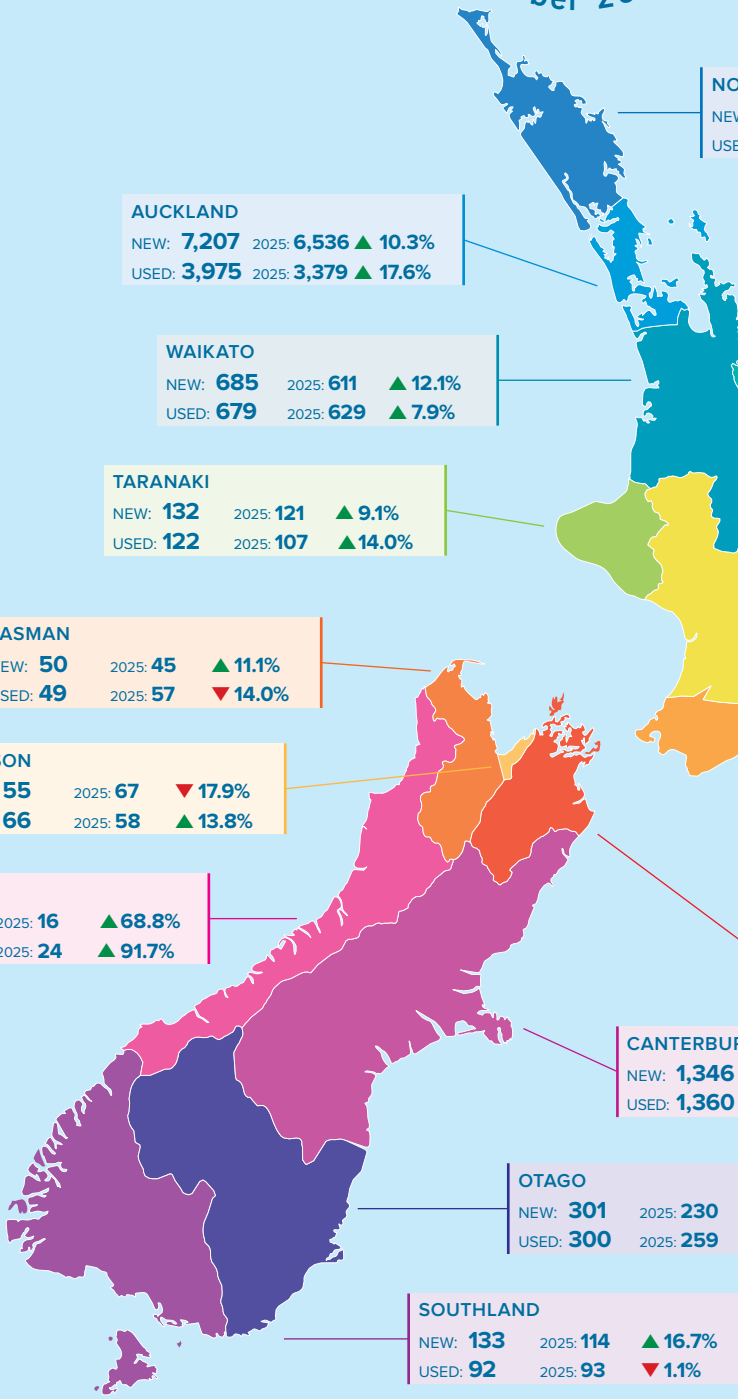
11,824

2025: 10,699 ▲ 10.5%

Total imported used cars

8,285

2025: 6,999 ▲ 18.4%



NORTHLAND
NEW: 196 2025: 169 ▲ 16.0%
USED: 153 2025: 135 ▲ 13.3%

AUCKLAND
NEW: 7,207 2025: 6,536 ▲ 10.3%
USED: 3,975 2025: 3,379 ▲ 17.6%

BAY OF PLENTY
NEW: 433 2025: 420 ▲ 3.1%
USED: 378 2025: 338 ▲ 11.8%

WAIKATO
NEW: 685 2025: 611 ▲ 12.1%
USED: 679 2025: 629 ▲ 7.9%

GISBORNE
NEW: 36 2025: 63 ▼ 42.9%
USED: 50 2025: 31 ▲ 61.3%

TARANAKI
NEW: 132 2025: 121 ▲ 9.1%
USED: 122 2025: 107 ▲ 14.0%

HAWKE'S BAY
NEW: 195 2025: 209 ▼ 6.7%
USED: 132 2025: 103 ▲ 28.2%

TASMAN
NEW: 50 2025: 45 ▲ 11.1%
USED: 49 2025: 57 ▼ 14.0%

MANAWATU-WHANGANUI
NEW: 315 2025: 259 ▲ 21.6%
USED: 201 2025: 171 ▲ 17.5%

NELSON
NEW: 55 2025: 67 ▼ 17.9%
USED: 66 2025: 58 ▲ 13.8%

WELLINGTON
NEW: 654 2025: 631 ▲ 3.6%
USED: 614 2025: 533 ▲ 15.2%

WEST COAST
NEW: 27 2025: 16 ▲ 68.8%
USED: 46 2025: 24 ▲ 91.7%

MARLBOROUGH
NEW: 54 2025: 49 ▲ 10.2%
USED: 44 2025: 30 ▲ 46.7%

CANTERBURY
NEW: 1,346 2025: 1,150 ▲ 17.0%
USED: 1,360 2025: 1,046 ▲ 30.0%

OTAGO
NEW: 301 2025: 230 ▲ 30.9%
USED: 300 2025: 259 ▲ 15.8%

SOUTHLAND
NEW: 133 2025: 114 ▲ 16.7%
USED: 92 2025: 93 ▼ 1.1%

OTHERS (Chatham Islands, overseas, unknown)
NEW: 5 2025: 9 ▼ 44.4%
USED: 24 2025: 6 ▲ 300.0%

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Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - October 2026

MAKE	OCT '26	OCT '25	+/- %	OCT '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	3,249	2,684	21.1%	39.2%	27,980	36.4%
Nissan	1,369	982	39.4%	16.5%	12,199	15.9%
Mazda	892	1,006	-11.3%	10.8%	9,423	12.3%
Subaru	704	576	22.2%	8.5%	7,035	9.2%
Honda	668	529	26.3%	8.1%	6,288	8.2%
BMW	225	250	-10.0%	2.7%	2,411	3.1%
Lexus	201	103	95.1%	2.4%	1,848	2.4%
Suzuki	182	160	13.8%	2.2%	1,770	2.3%
Mitsubishi	171	126	35.7%	2.1%	1,378	1.8%
Mercedes-Benz	122	143	-14.7%	1.5%	1,392	1.8%
Audi	117	136	-14.0%	1.4%	1,243	1.6%
Tesla	68	19	257.9%	0.8%	538	0.7%
Land Rover	52	44	18.2%	0.6%	576	0.8%
Volkswagen	37	73	-49.3%	0.4%	574	0.7%
Renault	24	0	2,400.0%	0.3%	49	0.1%
Ford	21	26	-19.2%	0.3%	209	0.3%
Volvo	19	15	26.7%	0.2%	187	0.2%
BYD	17	7	142.9%	0.2%	126	0.2%
Porsche	16	11	45.5%	0.2%	149	0.2%
Mini	16	15	6.7%	0.2%	247	0.3%
Jeep	16	10	60.0%	0.2%	171	0.2%
Jaguar	16	13	23.1%	0.2%	199	0.3%
Hyundai	15	3	400.0%	0.2%	101	0.1%
Lamborghini	9	0	900.0%	0.1%	13	0.0%
Peugeot	8	3	166.7%	0.1%	74	0.1%
Chrysler	6	7	-14.3%	0.1%	49	0.1%
LDV	5	2	150.0%	0.1%	30	0.0%
Chevrolet	4	15	-73.3%	0.0%	71	0.1%
Aston Martin	3	0	300.0%	0.0%	15	0.0%
Smart	2	1	100.0%	0.0%	9	0.0%
MG	2	1	100.0%	0.0%	28	0.0%
Mercury	2	1	100.0%	0.0%	3	0.0%
Maserati	2	0	200.0%	0.0%	16	0.0%
Kia	2	4	-50.0%	0.0%	41	0.1%
Holden	2	5	-60.0%	0.0%	35	0.0%
Others	21	29	-27.6%	0.3%	297	0.4%
Total	**8,285**	**6,999**	**18.4%**	**100.0%**	**76,774**	**100.0%**

Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - October 2026

MAKE	MODEL	OCT '26	OCT '25	+/- %	OCT '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Aqua	900	773	16.4%	10.9%	7,547	9.8%
Toyota	Prius	518	483	7.2%	6.3%	4,709	6.1%
Nissan	Note	465	320	45.3%	5.6%	3,910	5.1%
Toyota	Corolla	459	363	26.4%	5.5%	3,747	4.9%
Nissan	Leaf	262	110	138.2%	3.2%	2,224	2.9%
Nissan	Serena	254	188	35.1%	3.1%	2,042	2.7%
Toyota	C-HR	239	241	-0.8%	2.9%	2,223	2.9%
Subaru	Impreza	214	205	4.4%	2.6%	2,344	3.1%
Honda	Fit	208	230	-9.6%	2.5%	2,116	2.8%
Mazda	Axela	208	256	-18.8%	2.5%	2,263	2.9%
Subaru	XV	184	143	28.7%	2.2%	1,857	2.4%
Mazda	Demio	182	196	-7.1%	2.2%	2,000	2.6%
Mazda	CX-5	180	203	-11.3%	2.2%	1,749	2.3%
Honda	Vezel	179	121	47.9%	2.2%	1,487	1.9%
Nissan	X-Trail	176	170	3.5%	2.1%	1,815	2.4%
Toyota	Yaris	155	88	76.1%	1.9%	1,377	1.8%
Toyota	Vellfire	127	117	8.5%	1.5%	1,048	1.4%
Suzuki	Swift	112	107	4.7%	1.4%	1,191	1.6%
Toyota	RAV4	95	23	313.0%	1.1%	512	0.7%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	90	79	13.9%	1.1%	805	1.0%
Subaru	Levorg	89	40	122.5%	1.1%	744	1.0%
Toyota	Camry	81	70	15.7%	1.0%	597	0.8%
Mazda	Atenza	76	66	15.2%	0.9%	729	0.9%
Toyota	Sienta	75	38	97.4%	0.9%	398	0.5%
Toyota	Alphard	72	37	94.6%	0.9%	733	1.0%
Mazda	Premacy	69	60	15.0%	0.8%	677	0.9%
Subaru	Outback	60	50	20.0%	0.7%	455	0.6%
Lexus	CT 200h	55	25	120.0%	0.7%	426	0.6%
Subaru	Legacy	53	58	-8.6%	0.6%	601	0.8%
Honda	Shuttle	51	33	54.5%	0.6%	465	0.6%
BMW	Mini	51	51	0.0%	0.6%	510	0.7%
Toyota	Vitz	50	54	-7.4%	0.6%	511	0.7%
Honda	Grace	50	20	150.0%	0.6%	388	0.5%
Lexus	IS 300h	49	17	188.2%	0.6%	373	0.5%
Mitsubishi	Delica	48	10	380.0%	0.6%	218	0.3%
Others		2,149	1,954	10.0%	25.9%	21,983	28.6%
Total		**8,285**	**6,999**	**18.4%**	**100.0%**	**76,774**	**100.0%**

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Market Development

Training courses in demand

New enrolments for MITO's on-job training programmes across automotive, commercial road transport, extractives, drilling, gas and logistics have climbed by 23 per cent compared to the same period last year.

These are expected to continue increasing with 47,400 employment openings anticipated in MITO's industries between 2027 and 2032.

Automotive and commercial road transport – the two biggest – will together account for some 68 per cent of these vacancies.

The commercial road-transport industry, which is faced with an ageing workforce, experiences consistent demand for skilled drivers. Enrolments in MITO's programmes mirror this with a 129 per cent hike on last year's figures.

The growing popularity of battery electric and hybrid cars is being reflected in enrolments in EV programmes run by MITO.

The training organisation says it maintains a nationwide breadth of employer and learner coverage with strong participation in training across regional areas as well as larger urban centres.

SHARING IN SUCCESS

Turners Automotive Group has issued shares under its 2026 employee share scheme (ESS) and 2023 long-term incentive programme to a record number of staff.

The scheme is in its fifth year and 72 per cent of the group's wider team have joined.

"This is a fantastic outcome for our team and shareholder base," enthuses Todd Hunter, chief executive officer. "The ownership mindset combined with high engagement levels continues to be a powerful combination and strong advantage for the organisation."

Sales up 18%

Some 8,285 used-imported cars were registered last month for a year-on-year increase of 18.4 per cent from 6,999.

The Toyota Aqua topped the ladder with 900 units for a 10.9 per cent market share. Next up was the Prius with 518 and Nissan's Note was third on 465.

The Corolla was fourth with 459 and Nissan's Leaf notched up 262 sales for a jump of 138.2 per cent.

By mid-September, employees applied for a total of 104,139 shares in the record 2026 ESS round. After utilising those already held by the scheme's trustees, 77,978 new shares have been issued and represent 0.09 per cent of issued capital.

The company's ESS allows permanent part and full-time employees to invest $1,000 and receive $2,000 worth of shares after a three-year vesting period. All are offered three-year interest-free loans to take part.

CAR VOLUMES UP

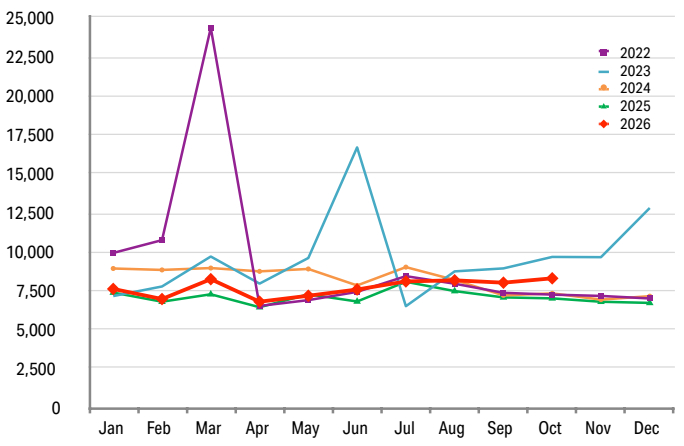
CentrePort reports 14,706 vehicles were imported through the facility in the year to the end of June 2026, a nine per cent increase on 2024/25.

The rise came as the Wellington port's underlying net profit after tax climbed by 19 per cent, or $3.3 million, over the same period to $20.9m, and its number of twenty-foot equivalent units rose by 69 per cent to 145,155.

Net revenue went up by 16 per cent year-on-year, supported by higher container volumes and continued strength across key cargo streams.

The company says the results reflect continued growth across core operations and reinforce the port's strategic role in New Zealand's supply chain.

Used Imported Passenger Registrations - 2022–2026



Used Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Motive Power - October 2026

MAKE	OCT '26	OCT '25	+/- %	OCT '26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	396	157	152.2%	4.8%	3,318	4.3%
Plug-in hybrid electric	100	64	56.3%	1.2%	851	1.1%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	4,472	3,472	28.8%	54.0%	38,258	49.8%
Petrol	3,181	3,190	-0.3%	38.4%	33,081	43.1%
Diesel	136	116	17.2%	1.6%	1,265	1.6%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	**8,285**	**6,999**	**18.4%**		**76,774**	

Motive Power Development

Market Shift

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MIA Motor Industry Association

Warning over exemption criteria

Advice has been issued to businesses completing applications to register VIN-exempt vehicles by using form MR2B.

The NZTA says people must ensure the car involved isn't required to undergo entry certification or be registered on an application to register, which is done via form MR2A.

An agency spokesperson says: "We have seen cases where vehicles that require entry certification or to be registered on the MR2A have been incorrectly registered as identification number exempt. Vehicles requiring entry certification must not be registered through the MR2B VIN-exempt pathway.

"The VIN-exempt registration is only available for vehicles that meet specific criteria, such as certain agricultural, off-road or specialist vehicles. We've seen instances when motorcycles, new mopeds and passenger vehicles have been registered as mobile machines or agricultural."

Registering a car under the wrong pathway can bypass safety and compliance processes, result in incorrect registration, licensing or fee treatment, create inaccurate records in the motor-vehicle register, and undermine the registration and compliance systems.

Before you register, always check the vehicle has been correctly identified, any VIN has been recorded correctly, its classification reflects its actual design and use, and it meets criteria for VIN-exempt registration before using the MR2B process.

"Getting the classification and registration pathway right the first time helps maintain accurate records, and supports a safe and compliant fleet," adds the NZTA.

"We are monitoring incorrect registrations. Once identified, they will be cancelled."

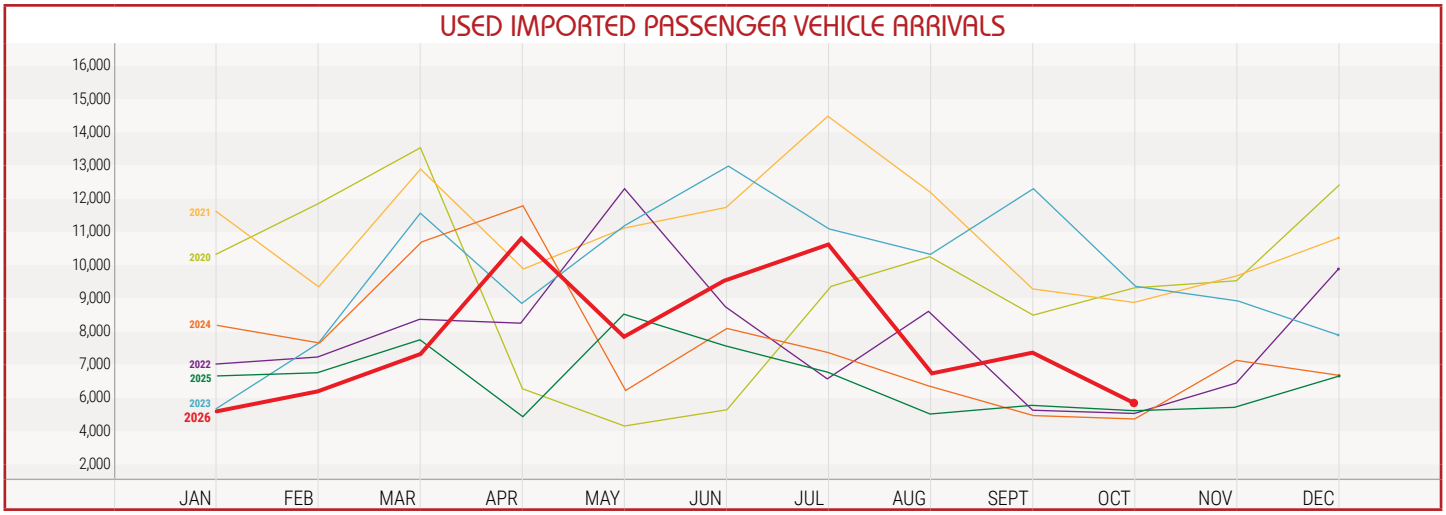
The agency adds more can now be done with its app. For example, people can buy road-user charges and renew registration directly from within the app for a "more convenient and seamless way to manage obligations".

USED IMPORTS DIP

Some 5,762 used passenger vehicles crossed the border in October, which was down from 7,357 in September.

Japan accounted for 5,544 units and 96.2 per cent of the total.

There were also 139 from Australia, 26 from the UK, 25 from Singapore and 13 from the US.



Used Imported Passenger Vehicles By Country Of Export

COUNTRY OF EXPORT	2026												2025		2024	
	JAN '26	FEB '26	MAR '26	APR '26	MAY '26	JUN '26	JUL '26	AUG '26	SEP '26	OCT '26	OCT MRKT %	2026 TOTAL	2025 TOTAL	MARKET %	2024 TOTAL	MARKET %
Australia	89	156	193	367	131	148	147	135	117	139	2.4%	**1,622**	1,599	2.1%	1,285	1.5%
Great Britain	17	14	13	8	13	12	8	8	13	26	0.5%	**132**	334	0.4%	255	0.3%
Japan	4,966	5,860	7,108	10,078	7,608	8,983	10,375	6,560	7,176	5,544	96.2%	**74,258**	74,956	96.8%	86,040	97.5%
Singapore	27	8	9	18	29	23	23	12	22	25	0.4%	**196**	173	0.2%	256	0.3%
USA	28	13	19	8	12	9	15	19	15	13	0.2%	**151**	204	0.3%	249	0.3%
Other countries	9	8	11	8	8	25	12	12	14	15	0.3%	**122**	143	0.2%	170	0.2%
Total	**5,136**	**6,059**	**7,353**	**10,487**	**7,801**	**9,200**	**10,580**	**6,746**	**7,357**	**5,762**	**100.0%**	**76,481**	**77,409**	**100%**	**88,255**	**100.0%**



Gangs export stolen vehicles

Cars are being stolen before being despatched overseas to be used as parts in Russia and Iran.

The Insurance Council of Australia says Melbourne is the country's main centre for vehicle thieves, from petty criminals to organised syndicates.

The offenders are packing cars into shipping containers and sending them to intermediary ports to bypass detection before they are forwarded to sanctioned nations.

Victoria recorded more than 12,300 car-theft claims in 2025/26 at AU$244.3 million or about NZ$301m. Nationally, the total exceeded half a billion dollars.

Andrew Hall, the Insurance Council's chief executive, says while vehicle crime includes joyriding and domestic reselling, a growing proportion are stolen for export. Two-thirds of those taken in Melbourne are never recovered locally and detections of Australian-registered parts overseas have gone up.

Police in Victoria and Queensland have raided shipping containers at ports and wrecking yards, recovering stolen cars. Arrests made have been linked to an international crime syndicate that has illegally shipped tens of millions of dollars of vehicles to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Hall told the Brisbane Times insurers believe that after arriving in the UAE as illegal shipments, cars are dismantled for parts to be sent primarily to Iran and Russia.

A lucrative market for used components has emerged because sanctions ban manufacturers from selling legitimate parts to repairers in those countries.

"Australia has become part of a supply chain for sanctioned nations," says Hall.

"We've got examples of authorities overseas finding containers of Victorian-registered vehicles in the UAE. We don't check things leaving the country."

He adds that since local car manufacturing ended, any shipping container full of vehicles leaving Australia should raise suspicion. Common Japanese and South Korean brands are among the most targeted due to their popularity with Iranian and Russian motorists.

DECLINE IN TRADE

Some 16,312 second-hand cars were sold by dealers to the public last month for a 2.1 per cent drop from 16,665 in October 2025.

SECONDHAND CAR SALES - October 2026

	DEALER TO PUBLIC				PUBLIC TO PUBLIC			PUBLIC TO DEALER		
REGION	OCT '26	OCT '25	+/- %	MARKET SHARE	OCT '26	OCT '25	+/- %	OCT '26	OCT '25	+/- %
Northland	570	568	0.4%	3.5%	1,699	1,974	-13.9%	188	207	-9.2%
Auckland	5,434	5,619	-3.3%	33.3%	12,940	13,928	-7.1%	5,828	6,191	-5.9%
Waikato	1,635	1,725	-5.2%	10.0%	3,688	4,244	-13.1%	1,137	1,203	-5.5%
Bay of Plenty	1,139	1,127	1.1%	7.0%	2,770	3,067	-9.7%	639	654	-2.3%
Gisborne	165	160	3.1%	1.0%	337	374	-9.9%	29	60	-51.7%
Hawke's Bay	615	591	4.1%	3.8%	1,204	1,472	-18.2%	406	439	-7.5%
Taranaki	376	374	0.5%	2.3%	1,040	1,060	-1.9%	167	189	-11.6%
Manawatu-Whanganui	829	847	-2.1%	5.1%	2,013	2,190	-8.1%	628	724	-13.3%
Wellington	1,510	1,546	-2.3%	9.3%	2,959	3,243	-8.8%	1,055	1,114	-5.3%
Tasman	132	132	0.0%	0.8%	446	553	-19.3%	26	12	116.7%
Nelson	129	159	-18.9%	0.8%	412	447	-7.8%	122	146	-16.4%
Marlborough	121	117	3.4%	0.7%	342	359	-4.7%	53	54	-1.9%
West Coast	111	118	-5.9%	0.7%	325	282	15.2%	39	50	-22.0%
Canterbury	2,426	2,483	-2.3%	14.9%	5,445	5,762	-5.5%	2,194	2,217	-1.0%
Otago	764	726	5.2%	4.7%	2,193	2,187	0.3%	428	466	-8.2%
Southland	319	321	-0.6%	2.0%	923	1,061	-13.0%	132	170	-22.4%
Other	37	52	-28.8%	0.2%	125	149	-16.1%	19	0	0.0%
NZ Total	**16,312**	**16,665**	**-2.1%**	**100.0%**	**38,861**	**42,352**	**-8.2%**	**13,090**	**13,896**	**-5.8%**



New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - October 2026

MAKE	OCT'26	OCT'25	+/-%	OCT'26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	2,978	3,229	-7.8%	25.2%	18,773	19.9%
Kia	1,173	838	40.0%	9.9%	8,663	9.2%
Mitsubishi	1,121	1,149	-2.4%	9.5%	8,481	9.0%
Mazda	788	566	39.2%	6.7%	3,925	4.2%
GWM	611	281	117.4%	5.2%	4,133	4.4%
BYD	588	108	444.4%	5.0%	5,007	5.3%
MG	498	378	31.7%	4.2%	4,450	4.7%
Ford	436	678	-35.7%	3.7%	3,356	3.6%
Honda	358	352	1.7%	3.0%	2,907	3.1%
Suzuki	320	351	-8.8%	2.7%	3,661	3.9%
Chery	298	256	16.4%	2.5%	2,352	2.5%
Hyundai	252	586	-57.0%	2.1%	2,840	3.0%
Nissan	223	166	34.3%	1.9%	1,549	1.6%
Jaecoo	211	102	106.9%	1.8%	1,595	1.7%
Geely	204	25	716.0%	1.7%	1,031	1.1%
Subaru	189	185	2.2%	1.6%	1,761	1.9%
Lexus	147	103	42.7%	1.2%	1,246	1.3%
Volkswagen	145	135	7.4%	1.2%	1,241	1.3%
Audi	140	127	10.2%	1.2%	1,261	1.3%
BMW	106	134	-20.9%	0.9%	1,458	1.5%
Leapmotor	100	33	203.0%	0.8%	593	0.6%
Tesla	97	84	15.5%	0.8%	3,350	3.6%
Land Rover	97	92	5.4%	0.8%	1,033	1.1%
Mercedes-Benz	75	133	-43.6%	0.6%	1,072	1.1%
BAIC	66	0	6,600.0%	0.6%	640	0.7%
Zeekr	65	21	209.5%	0.5%	633	0.7%
GAC	60	0	6,000.0%	0.5%	506	0.5%
Dongfeng	49	3	1,533.3%	0.4%	1,019	1.1%
Mini	47	94	-50.0%	0.4%	782	0.8%
Volvo	45	52	-13.5%	0.4%	512	0.5%
Omoda	37	83	-55.4%	0.3%	604	0.6%
Xpeng	36	0	3,600.0%	0.3%	237	0.3%
Cupra	36	39	-7.7%	0.3%	297	0.3%
Porsche	33	33	0.0%	0.3%	436	0.5%
Arcfox	28	0	2,800.0%	0.2%	75	0.1%
Others	167	283	-41.0%	1.4%	2,773	2.9%
Total	**11,824**	**10,699**	**10.5%**	**100.0%**	**94,252**	**100.0%**

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - October 2026

MAKE	MODEL	OCT'26	OCT'25	+/-%	OCT'26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	RAV4	1,174	1,631	-28.0%	9.9%	6,775	7.2%
Toyota	Corolla Cross	912	165	452.7%	7.7%	4,357	4.6%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	732	588	24.5%	6.2%	3,805	4.0%
Kia	Sportage	474	196	141.8%	4.0%	2,576	2.7%
Ford	Everest	322	506	-36.4%	2.7%	2,450	2.6%
Mitsubishi	ASX	304	429	-29.1%	2.6%	3,441	3.7%
GWM	Haval H6	299	182	64.3%	2.5%	2,227	2.4%
BYD	Atto 2	220	0	22,000.0%	1.9%	1,019	1.1%
Toyota	Yaris Cross	214	549	-61.0%	1.8%	1,534	1.6%
MG	ZS	211	174	21.3%	1.8%	1,890	2.0%
Toyota	Corolla	208	319	-34.8%	1.8%	1,778	1.9%
Mazda	CX-30	184	112	64.3%	1.6%	805	0.9%
Nissan	X-Trail	172	108	59.3%	1.5%	1,213	1.3%
Kia	Sorento	171	55	210.9%	1.4%	626	0.7%
Mazda	CX-3	171	42	307.1%	1.4%	514	0.5%
Mazda	Mazda3	167	128	30.5%	1.4%	338	0.4%
Kia	Stonic	164	76	115.8%	1.4%	1,564	1.7%
Suzuki	Swift	154	140	10.0%	1.3%	1,413	1.5%
Chery	Tiggo 4 Pro	149	167	-10.8%	1.3%	1,191	1.3%
Kia	Carnival	142	123	15.4%	1.2%	805	0.9%
Hyundai	Tucson	131	280	-53.2%	1.1%	1,700	1.8%
Mazda	CX-5	120	138	-13.0%	1.0%	1,240	1.3%
Toyota	Land Cruiser Prado	119	143	-16.8%	1.0%	1,144	1.2%
Honda	ZR-V	115	135	-14.8%	1.0%	693	0.7%
GWM	Ora	112	0	11,200.0%	0.9%	383	0.4%
GWM	Haval Jolion	112	64	75.0%	0.9%	869	0.9%
Toyota	Highlander	105	98	7.1%	0.9%	825	0.9%
Geely	Starray EM-i	104	0	10,400.0%	0.9%	503	0.5%
Jaecoo	J5	102	0	10,200.0%	0.9%	724	0.8%
Kia	EV3	98	34	188.2%	0.8%	678	0.7%
MG	MG 4	98	5	1,860.0%	0.8%	787	0.8%
Subaru	Outback	91	102	-10.8%	0.8%	818	0.9%
Hyundai	Kona	85	94	-9.6%	0.7%	676	0.7%
Jaecoo	J7	81	102	-20.6%	0.7%	843	0.9%
Honda	CR-V	81	80	1.3%	0.7%	560	0.6%
Others		3,726	3,734	-0.2%	31.5%	41,488	44.0%
Total		**11,824**	**10,699**	**10.5%**	**100.0%**	**94,252**	**100.0%**

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Common Segmentation

Market Development

Record recall over door handles

About 4.3 million vehicles have been called back in China over concerns their doors may be difficult to open in an emergency.

Remedies in the country's biggest car recall range from software updates to improved markings around handles.

Beijing has this year boosted oversight of the EV industry by introducing tougher safety requirements.

The authorities there have already said they will ban concealed door handles from 2027, making it the first country to phase out a design popularised by Tesla and widely adopted by domestic Chinese brands.

Emergency mechanical door releases, which may be hard to locate or operate in an accident, are being targeted by regulators.

The recall's scale reflects the size of China's fleet and increasing scrutiny of safety defects as cars become more software driven.

Manufacturers are installing warning labels free of charge to identify the handles and most will also deploy over-the-air software updates.

Tesla's recall is the largest at 2.98 million imported and China-made Model 3, Model Y, Model S and Model X vehicles.

In addition to the labels, the company will issue an update delivered remotely that automatically lowers windows after a collision.

Xiaomi is calling back about 390,000 units, Leapmotor around 371,000 and Xpeng some 264,000.

Door handles that open via a key fob, smartphone or touch-sensitive panel are also under the scrutiny of American regulators.

The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says it will consider new standards to address the risk of occupant entrapment in vehicles during electrical power failures.

Toyota double

There were 11,824 new cars sold in October, which was up by 10.5 per cent from 10,699 during last year's same month. Toyota's RAV4 came first on 1,174 units with the Corolla Cross second on 912. Mitsubishi's Outlander completed the top three on 732. Next up were Kia's Sportage with 474 and Ford's Everest on 322.
Three models by Chinese brands made the top 10 – GWM's Haval H6 with 299, BYD's Atto 2 on 220 and MG's ZS with 211.

FIRST FOR RENTALS

Eligible corporate clients can hire a Toyota Mirai through Ezi Car Rental, which has added three of the fuel-cell EVs (FCEVs) to its fleet at Palmerston North Airport.

Powered by the Hiringa refuelling station nearby, they are the first FCEVs available via a rental fleet.

The sedans, which have a range of 250km, are available for up to two days' hire.

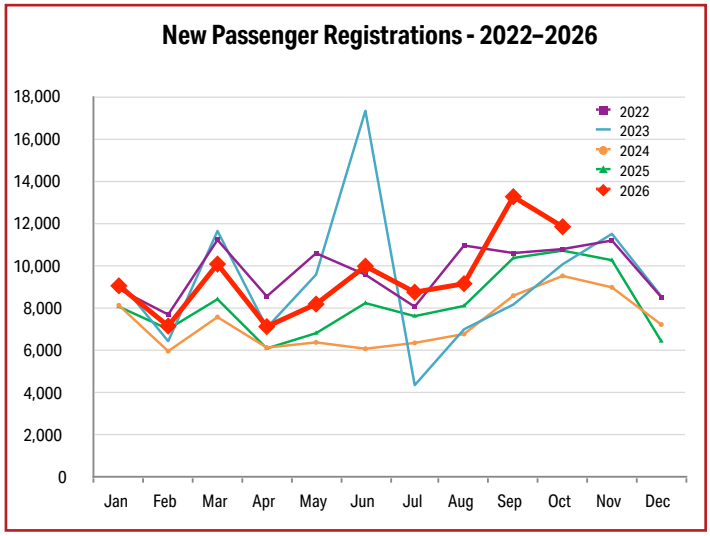
"Most of our customers have never seen a hydrogen vehicle, let alone driven one, which is why we wanted to be part of this," says Anthony Kearns, chief executive of Ezi Car Rental.

"The Mirai is a special experience and renting one takes no more effort than hiring any other car. Once people try it, it will change how they think about travel."

Toyota-trained technicians are on hand to support the FCEVs. Operating at 24 locations, including 18 airport sites, Ezi says it has the infrastructure and customer base to make hydrogen rental practical.



A Toyota Mirai



New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Motive Power - October 2026

MAKE	OCT'26	OCT'25	+/-%	OCT'26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	1,481	502	195.0%	12.5%	15,834	16.8%
Plug-in hybrid electric	1,477	515	186.8%	12.5%	10,422	11.1%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	4,978	4,873	2.2%	42.1%	34,095	36.2%
Petrol	3,265	3,709	-12.0%	27.6%	28,254	30.0%
Diesel	623	1,100	-43.4%	5.3%	5,647	6.0%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	**11,824**	**10,699**	**10.5%**		**94,252**	

Motive Power Development

Market Shift

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Focus on commercial buyers

Ford is upping the ante in the commercial-vehicle segment on both sides of the Tasman.

The marque has launched an initiative in New Zealand that's designed to deliver high-quality conversions and customisations to strengthen its line-up.

It has two partners, Camco and Fleetline, on board with Ford Pro Converter (FPC) after identifying several core industries where vehicles require specialised, heavy-duty modifications to operate.

The programme connects commercial and fleet customers with a national network of Ford-certified conversion specialists.

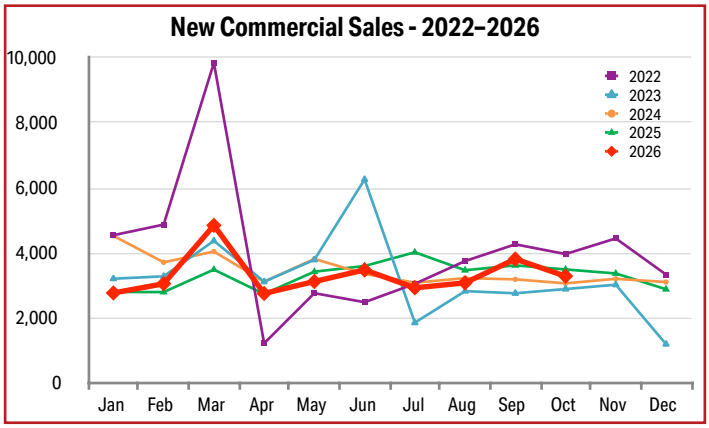
To achieve approved FPC status, modifiers undergo a rigorous assessment by blue-oval engineers to ensure designs, build quality and installation methods align with strict standards. Following an audit, these specialists are certified for specific segments and modification types to provide OEM-grade finishes.

"Our commercial customers require vehicles tailored to their needs without compromising on safety, quality or reliability," says Annaliese Atina, of Ford NZ. "The programme delivers that by providing work-ready solutions."

The certified converter's warranty duration aligns with Ford's new-vehicle policy.

Atina adds: "By working directly with local specialists, we are delivering an experience that eliminates after-market hassle, reduces downtime, and ensures every modification integrates with our vehicles' advanced safety and electrical systems."

While Ford NZ will continue to offer Ford Genuine Accessories and dealer-fit licensed accessories, FPC complements these by catering for complex and industry-specific conversions.



New Commercial Sales by Make - October 2026

MAKE	OCT'26	OCT'25	+/-%	OCT'26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	1,039	1,009	3.0%	31.6%	9,302	28.1%
Ford	911	948	-3.9%	27.7%	8,841	26.7%
Mitsubishi	203	244	-16.8%	6.2%	3,197	9.7%
BYD	197	111	77.5%	6.0%	1,533	4.6%
Isuzu	137	132	3.8%	4.2%	1,417	4.3%
LDV	96	138	-30.4%	2.9%	806	2.4%
Mercedes-Benz	78	118	-33.9%	2.4%	663	2.0%
Fiat	64	104	-38.5%	1.9%	338	1.0%
GWM	55	54	1.9%	1.7%	533	1.6%
JAC	54	23	134.8%	1.6%	223	0.7%
Nissan	48	96	-50.0%	1.5%	1,528	4.6%
Fuso	45	45	0.0%	1.4%	396	1.2%
Iveco	36	46	-21.7%	1.1%	345	1.0%
Hino	34	37	-8.1%	1.0%	366	1.1%
Farizon	33	10	230.0%	1.0%	187	0.6%
Foton	29	16	81.3%	0.9%	167	0.5%
Scania	27	25	8.0%	0.8%	332	1.0%
Volkswagen	26	58	-55.2%	0.8%	317	1.0%
Kia	24	50	-52.0%	0.7%	470	1.4%
Volvo	18	8	125.0%	0.5%	196	0.6%
Others	131	220	-40.5%	4.0%	1,902	5.8%
Total	**3,285**	**3,492**	**-5.9%**	**100.0%**	**33,059**	**100.0%**

New Commercial Sales by Model - October 2026

MAKE	MODEL	OCT'26	OCT'25	+/-%	OCT'26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Hilux	872	756	15.3%	26.5%	6,854	20.7%
Ford	Ranger	805	834	-3.5%	24.5%	7,868	23.8%
Mitsubishi	Triton	203	244	-16.8%	6.2%	3,197	9.7%
BYD	Shark 6	197	111	77.5%	6.0%	1,533	4.6%
Toyota	Hiace	147	216	-31.9%	4.5%	2,202	6.7%
Ford	Transit	96	105	-8.6%	2.9%	903	2.7%
Isuzu	D-Max	80	77	3.9%	2.4%	911	2.8%
Mercedes-Benz	Sprinter	71	106	-33.0%	2.2%	571	1.7%
Fiat	Ducato	62	102	-39.2%	1.9%	315	1.0%
GWM	Cannon	55	54	1.9%	1.7%	533	1.6%
LDV	Deliver 9	53	79	-32.9%	1.6%	443	1.3%
JAC	T9	52	19	173.7%	1.6%	211	0.6%
Nissan	Navara	48	96	-50.0%	1.5%	1,528	4.6%
Farizon	V7E	28	0	2,800.0%	0.9%	156	0.5%
Isuzu	N Series	25	27	-7.4%	0.8%	206	0.6%
Iveco	Daily	23	33	-30.3%	0.7%	264	0.8%
Isuzu	F Series	22	20	10.0%	0.7%	223	0.7%
LDV	T60	20	8	150.0%	0.6%	113	0.3%
Toyota	Land Cruiser	20	37	-45.9%	0.6%	246	0.7%
Hino	300	19	20	-5.0%	0.6%	146	0.4%
Others		387	548	-29.4%	11.8%	4,636	14.0%
Total		**3,285**	**3,492**	**-5.9%**	**100.0%**	**33,059**	**100.0%**

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Its introduction "underscores" the marque's commitment to commercial and fleet customers by helping to maximise vehicle uptime, reduce operational costs and boost business productivity.

Ford Australia, meanwhile, has launched Ford Pro, which is popular in Europe and North America. The thinking behind it is "if a customer's vehicles aren't on the road, they're not earning".

The company says the traditional fleet model has largely focused on selling and servicing commercials in isolation, but Ford Pro brings vehicles, customisation, finance, service and software into one ecosystem.

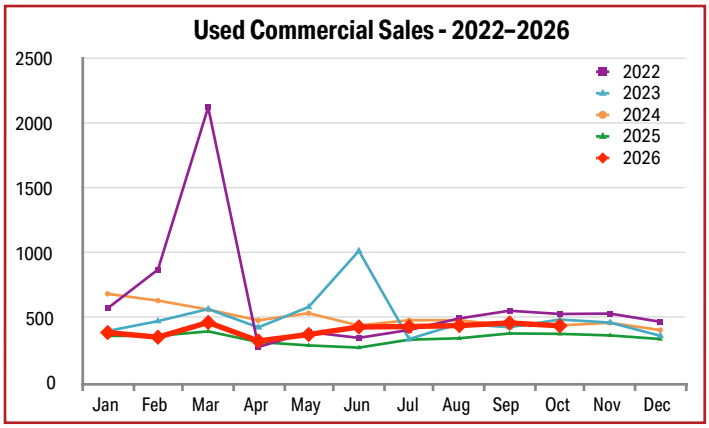
About half of all vehicles sold across the ditch are transacted through an Australian business number. Roughly 2.5 million small and medium-sized companies employ more than five million people, generating almost half the nation's GDP.

Ford Australia has also confirmed its post-purchase programme is getting better by extending the new seven-year, unlimited kilometre warranty to commercial clients who service exclusively at its dealer network.

"Our seven-year warranty is a commitment to retail and commercial customers that we've got their backs," says Greg Davidson, of the customer service division. "Ford Pro builds on that legacy to keep businesses moving. This is about giving owners real confidence, not just in the vehicle they've bought but in the brand."

Fadi Mawal, president and chief executive of Ford Australia and NZ, adds: "Our direction is clear – greater choice for customers, deeper loyalty, more foot traffic into our dealerships and a more diverse line-up.

"We will keep designing and engineering vehicles that are made for Australians and our tough conditions, while leveraging the best of Ford's global portfolio to move fast and stay affordable."



REGISTRATIONS FALL

There were 3,285 new commercials registered last month for a year-on-year fall of 5.9 per cent from 3,492.

The Toyota Hilux was the best-selling model with 872 units and a 26.5 per cent share of the market. The Ford Ranger came in second on 805 while Mitsubishi's Triton was third with 203.

Used Commercial Sales by Make - October 2026

MAKE	OCT'26	OCT'25	+/-%	OCT'26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	219	136	61.0%	49.7%	2,083	50.6%
Nissan	63	81	-22.2%	14.3%	653	15.9%
Ford	43	21	104.8%	9.8%	222	5.4%
Mitsubishi	19	20	-5.0%	4.3%	116	2.8%
Isuzu	19	16	18.8%	4.3%	183	4.4%
LDV	14	18	-22.2%	3.2%	177	4.3%
Hino	11	28	-60.7%	2.5%	166	4.0%
Volkswagen	8	4	100.0%	1.8%	64	1.6%
Mazda	8	9	-11.1%	1.8%	53	1.3%
Fiat	6	2	200.0%	1.4%	27	0.7%
Daihatsu	6	9	-33.3%	1.4%	102	2.5%
Suzuki	3	5	-40.0%	0.7%	78	1.9%
Chevrolet	3	4	-25.0%	0.7%	36	0.9%
Volvo	2	2	0.0%	0.5%	4	0.1%
UD Trucks	2	3	-33.3%	0.5%	16	0.4%
Mercedes-Benz	2	2	0.0%	0.5%	24	0.6%
Honda	2	0	200.0%	0.5%	8	0.2%
Holden	2	4	-50.0%	0.5%	17	0.4%
Fuso	2	3	-33.3%	0.5%	8	0.2%
Factory Built	2	0	200.0%	0.5%	3	0.1%
Others	5	12	-58.3%	1.1%	79	1.9%
Total	**441**	**379**	**16.4%**	**100.0%**	**4,119**	**100.0%**

Used Commercial Sales by Model - October 2026

MAKE	MODEL	OCT'26	OCT'25	+/-%	OCT'26 MKT SHARE	2026 YEAR TO DATE	2026 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Hiace	198	102	94.1%	44.9%	1,771	43.0%
Ford	Transit	25	4	525.0%	5.7%	44	1.1%
Nissan	NV200	21	29	-27.6%	4.8%	221	5.4%
Nissan	Caravan	18	14	28.6%	4.1%	146	3.5%
Ford	Ranger	15	6	150.0%	3.4%	128	3.1%
Fuso	Canter	12	13	-7.7%	2.7%	75	1.8%
Nissan	NV350	11	19	-42.1%	2.5%	137	3.3%
Isuzu	Elf	11	4	175.0%	2.5%	99	2.4%
Hino	Dutro	9	21	-57.1%	2.0%	122	3.0%
LDV	T60	8	12	-33.3%	1.8%	127	3.1%
Daihatsu	Hijet	6	9	-33.3%	1.4%	102	2.5%
Chevrolet	G10	6	6	0.0%	1.4%	41	1.0%
Toyota	Dyna	6	10	-40.0%	1.4%	83	2.0%
Fiat	Ducato	6	2	200.0%	1.4%	26	0.6%
Nissan	Vanette	5	6	-16.7%	1.1%	74	1.8%
Toyota	Land Cruiser	5	3	66.7%	1.1%	17	0.4%
Isuzu	Forward	5	2	150.0%	1.1%	41	1.0%
Mazda	BT-50	5	4	25.0%	1.1%	33	0.8%
Mitsubishi	Triton	4	3	33.3%	0.9%	21	0.5%
Toyota	Toyoace	4	2	100.0%	0.9%	45	1.1%
Others		61	108	-43.5%	13.8%	766	18.6%
Total		**441**	**379**	**16.4%**	**100.0%**	**4,119**	**100.0%**



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Brand expanding down under

The reborn Freelander brand will be appearing in showrooms here next year with six of its models slated for release over the coming five years.

Kym Mellow will lead the rollout after being appointed as head of Freelander Australia and New Zealand. He most recently held executive roles with Inchcape Australasia and Mazda Australia, and has more than 20 years' industry experience.

Mellow is responsible for establishing and developing the business, which includes brand strategy, market entry, sales, marketing, after-sales, and product and network development.

The marque's flagship, the Freelander 8, will be the first model launched here. It's a premium upper-large SUV which comes in more than 5.1 metres long.

The all-terrain brand has been created by Chery and Jaguar Land Rover (JLR).

It started sales in China in September and has also launched in the United Arab Emirates.

"Freelander brings together JLR's British design with the best of Chery's technology, scale and supply chain," says Mellow.

"We're reimagining Freelander as a premium, technology-led brand built for gravel tracks and city streets, and we're investing in the dealer partnerships and local team to make every part of ownership live up to that promise."

New Zealand and Australia have been identified as priority right-hand-drive markets as the brand expands globally.

Originally a Land Rover model, JLR licensed the Freelander name in June 2024 to create a standalone marque as part of its joint venture with Chery.

The companies say the partnership taps into their respective strengths, combining JLR's premium brand values with Chery's electric and hybrid technology and engineering know-how.

The vehicles are built in Changshu, Jiangsu Province, China, and the first Freelander 8 exited the factory gates in July.

The model's specifications and pricing are yet to be confirmed.

Dealer appointments on both sides of the Tasman will be announced in the lead-up to the marque's launch here.

FLEET LOOKS CHANGE

No longer the sole domain of the white ute or generic SUV, the face of New Zealand's fleet is shifting as buyers now consider marques they may not have looked at previously.

Yoogo Fleet, a technology-led specialist, has seen major market changes over the past decade, but believes the past two years have delivered some of the most significant.

Matt Barker, northern business development manager, says: "We're seeing a wave of brands enter the market and customers are taking the opportunity to explore alternatives rather than replacing their vehicles with the same brand they've always driven.

"The fundamentals still matter, such as practicality, fit for purpose, good quality and value for money. But we're also seeing more businesses want vehicles with strong presences that reflect their brand. We're agnostic so we take a brief and make a recommendation ▶

Imports vs sales – new passenger vehicles

	CAR SALES		VARIANCE	AVG SALES PER DAY	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE
	IMPORTED	REGISTERED			
Oct '25	9,351	10,699	-1,348	345	267
Nov '25	8,226	10,217	-1,991	341	270
Dec '25	8,889	6,378	2,511	206	268
Jan '26	6,427	8,997	-2,570	290	271
Feb '26	6,781	7,137	-356	255	271
Mar '26	8,525	10,033	-1,508	324	276
Apr '26	6,857	7,102	-245	237	278
May '26	8,113	8,156	-43	263	282
Jun '26	8,565	9,937	-1,372	331	287
Jul '26	12,818	8,712	4,106	281	290
Aug '26	8,692	9,125	-433	294	293
Sep '26	7,430	13,229	-5,799	441	301
Oct '26	**10,083**	**11,824**	**-1,741**	**381**	**304**
Year to date	84,291	94,252			
Change on last month	35.7%	-10.6%			
Change on Oct 2025	**7.8%**	**10.5%**			
	MORE IMPORTED	MORE SOLD			

Imports vs sales – used passenger vehicles

	CAR SALES		VARIANCE	AVG SALES PER DAY	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE
	IMPORTED	REGISTERED			
Oct '25	5,422	6,999	-1,577	226	234
Nov '25	5,657	6,775	-1,118	226	234
Dec '25	6,727	6,692	35	216	233
Jan '26	5,136	7,591	-2,455	245	233
Feb '26	6,059	6,946	-887	248	234
Mar '26	7,353	8,217	-864	265	236
Apr '26	10,487	6,779	3,708	226	237
May '26	7,801	7,162	639	231	237
Jun '26	9,200	7,561	1,639	252	239
Jul '26	10,580	8,079	2,501	261	239
Aug '26	6,746	8,151	-1,405	263	241
Sep '26	7,357	8,003	-646	267	244
Oct '26	**5,762**	**8,285**	**-2,523**	**267**	**247**
Year to date	76,481	76,774			
Change on last month	-21.7%	3.5%			
Change on Oct 2025	**6.3%**	**18.4%**			
	MORE IMPORTED	MORE SOLD			

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One business embracing that approach is Auckland-based Elite Signs and Graphics (ESG), which rescoped its fleet at renewal time.

It decided to add a Cupra Leon Sportstourer, which is a station wagon, and a Formentor, a crossover SUV. Before they hit the road, a full vinyl wrap was undertaken to maximise the real estate they offered.

Brendon Rogers, director at ESG, says: "We want to ensure the signage isn't a distraction from the form of the vehicle but one that hugs it.

"We've integrated the Cupra symbol into a bespoke design to accentuate the form of each vehicle. We get calls all the time from people who have seen them on the road and love them."

A wrap has the added benefit of protecting the vehicle. It's also a popular choice for leased cars as an extra insurance policy on the paintwork.



One of ESG's Cupras in a full vinyl wrap

Looking ahead, Yoogo expects three trends to continue shaping fleet-purchasing decisions – greater electrification, openness to new and emerging brands, and an increased focus on value.

Barker says: "We're seeing businesses factor in running costs and long-term value more than ever, alongside real interest in electric and hybrid options. With new brands entering the market, there's more appetite to explore what's out there."

COMPANY'S LANDMARK

Maruti Suzuki has crossed the 100,000-unit export milestone to Japan for its made-in-India Jimny 5-door, Fronx and e Vitara.

The statistic underlines the growing role of India as a manufacturing and export hub for the brand, while Japan has emerged as Maruti Suzuki's second-largest export market by volume.

The Fronx was the first of the three models to be exported to Japan with shipments starting in August 2024. The Jimny 5-door followed in December of the same year and the e Vitara joined the fold in September 2025.

The e Vitara and Jimny 5-door are manufactured exclusively in India. The former is Maruti Suzuki's first all-electric model and is exported to several international markets.

New imports rise

There were 10,083 new passenger vehicles imported in October, the second-highest monthly tally of the past year and 35.7 per cent more than the 7,430 units recorded in September.

The year-to-date total is 84,291 units, while 94,252 new cars have been sold in the same period.

Daily sales, averaged over the past year, have increased for eight consecutive months to now stand at 304 units.

As for used-imported cars, there were 8,285 registrations last month and 5,762 units came into New Zealand. Average sales per day were 267 in October and the 12-monthly average rose for the third month in a row to 247 per day.

The 3,208 new commercials imported last month was up 33.5 per cent on the previous October and 3,052 sales were completed. Registrations per day, as averaged over the past year, are 110.

As for used commercials, 353 were registered for the first time last month compared to 251 being imported. Year to date, 2,947 have crossed the border.

Imports vs sales – new commercials

	CAR SALES		VARIANCE	AVG SALES PER DAY	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE
	IMPORTED	REGISTERED			
Oct '25	2,403	2,792	-389	90	106
Nov '25	1,292	3,487	-2,195	116	105
Dec '25	2,338	2,738	-400	88	104
Jan '26	2,360	3,426	-1,066	111	103
Feb '26	2,074	3,600	-1,526	129	103
Mar '26	3,135	4,020	-885	130	106
Apr '26	1,901	3,627	-1,726	121	107
May '26	1,860	3,621	-1,761	117	108
Jun '26	2,016	3,498	-1,482	117	109
Jul '26	3,370	3,346	24	108	110
Aug '26	1,956	2,875	-919	93	109
Sep '26	1,658	2,762	-1,104	92	109
Oct '26	**3,208**	**3,052**	**156**	**98**	**110**
Year to date	23,538	33,827			
Change on last month	93.5%	10.5%			
Change on Oct 2025	**33.5%**	**9.3%**			
	MORE IMPORTED	MORE SOLD			

Imports vs sales – used commercials

	CAR SALES		VARIANCE	AVG SALES PER DAY	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE
	IMPORTED	REGISTERED			
Oct '25	325	365	-40	12	15
Nov '25	262	399	-137	13	15
Dec '25	330	315	15	10	14
Jan '26	189	290	-101	9	13
Feb '26	252	274	-22	10	13
Mar '26	365	333	32	11	13
Apr '26	380	345	35	12	12
May '26	175	383	-208	12	12
Jun '26	248	380	-132	13	12
Jul '26	434	366	68	12	12
Aug '26	289	339	-50	11	11
Sep '26	364	389	-25	13	11
Oct '26	**251**	**353**	**-102**	**11**	**11**
Year to date	2,947	3,452			
Change on last month	-31.0%	-9.3%			
Change on Oct 2025	**-22.8%**	**-3.3%**			
	LESS IMPORTED	LESS SOLD			

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