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MG'S PETER CIAO SETS BRAND FOR GROWTH

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MG SETS GROWTH PATH WITH HS

To be a volume player in the Australian car market you really need to have a ute.

If not a ute, a small or medium size SUV will do the trick.

SAIC with its MG Motor brand has just launched the latter, while indicating the former may be in the works.

Though if you are waiting for the MG Extender ute now on sale in Thailand, you will be disappointed.

AutoTalk got the chance to sit down with MG Motor chief executive **Peter Ciao** at the local reveal last month of the new HS SUV. The HS replaces the GS in the brand's line-up, competes in size with cars like the Mazda CX-5 and Toyota RAV4, but undercuts on headline sticker price, at driveaway \$30,990 for the entry Vibe model and driveaway \$33,990 for the higher specification Excite model. The new model arrives in dealerships early next year.

Both are front-wheel drive for now, all-wheel drive is under consideration, and are powered by a 1.5-litre turbocharged engine producing 124kW and 250Nm, paired with a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission.

Impressively, both get an extensive suite of driver assistance and safety features, which the MG team told AutoTalk at the Sydney reveal of the model has been tested and verified on Australasian roads.

The tech is grouped under the 'MG Pilot' name, and includes autonomous emergency braking, lane keep assist, adaptive cruise control, traffic jam assist, speed-sign recognition, automatic high-beam, rear-cross traffic alert, blind-spot detection and a door opening warning. This adds to traditional safety hardware like electronic stability control, active yaw control, brake disc wiping and electric brakeforce distribution.

Both models are highly specified, with a leatherette interior trim, soft-touch dash, part-digital instrument panel, 10.1-inch touchscreen with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, climate control air-conditioning, cooled centre console,



keyless entry and USB charging for front and rear passengers.

The Excite adds 18-inch alloy wheels, dual-zone for the climate control, LED lighting, paddle-shifters, electric tailgate and a 'Sports Mode', activated by a large red button on the flat-bottomed steering wheel.

A quick inspection of the HS while on display at MG's Sydney dealership showed the build quality and finish is a level ahead of the brand's previous models, and that it is rapidly closing in on Japanese competitors. Touches like the well-finished steering wheel, embossed leather shifter and soft-touch materials throughout do give it a slightly premium feel, akin to a Mazda or lower-end Audi model.

Ciao believes the HS will have a broad appeal.

"We're very excited about the potential that the MG HS provides to our local business and our dealers are confident of the appeal of this new model. As we

The tech is grouped under the 'MG Pilot' name, and includes autonomous emergency braking, lane keep assist, adaptive cruise control, traffic jam assist, speed-sign recognition, automatic high-beam, rear-cross traffic alert, blind-spot detection and a door opening warning.

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continue to build trust in the market, we look forward to seeing the MG HS on local roads soon."

"This model is a real milestone for us."

It leads a product onslaught for the brand, including a Corolla-sized hatchback, another SUV and a 'crossover' model.

A ute, he indicates, will be coming - and he has made the pitch to China for one. It is unlikely to be the Extender - based on the LDV T60 - in part due to MG's positioning as a premium brand.

Ciao says an MG ute for this end of the world will potentially come around 2025, and be developed to fit that premium mould.

"Australians, for this kind of product, are very demanding. We will invest the money and build an all new model."

Sydney dealership a chance to listen to customers

In June this year MG did something not incredibly common among distributors, opening its own dealership.

Sydney City MG, housed in an impressive multi-level building in Alexandria, the operation is led by dealer principal **Kim Nguyen**, features a range of MG related displays including an all-wheel drive electric drivetrain, images of classic MG vehicles and a large green-wall display. Ciao says it is largely the same as other dealerships that sell the brand, but plays the additional role of allowing them to understand their customers.

"We are listening to the customer voice, that is why I built this showroom," he says.

General manager of marketing and product development **Danny Lenart** indicted to *AutoTalk* further factory-owned dealerships are not planned, though growth continues for the network. How many dealers they will ultimately have has not yet been decided. "We haven't decided on that number," Lenart says. "Right now we want to make sure we have dealers in the right areas that they can run a profitable business."

"If you look at the kind of dealer that is on board, they are very forward thinking, and have a similar mindset to MG, and a number mindset, because we have been able to find the right people with the right mindset."

MG has been bullish at asking dealers to develop relatively substantial and high standard facilities for an incoming challenger brand. The ability to invest in such ways is not the key factor in appointing new ones.

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OP2MA LANDS MAJOR FINANCIER

Adelaide-based automotive solutions provider Op2ma has landed a major contract with a global financier based out of South Africa. Due to contractual obligations they can't name the customer.

Op2ma, a subsidiary of Fusion Business Solutions, supplies a range of solutions to automotive clients, including global OEMs, auto financiers, insurers and auto dealers.

The new contract will see Op2ma supply its Ri-gnr8 solution to the global financier and its dealer network. Ri-gnr8 (pronounced "re-generate") has sophisticated data mining capability allowing clients to optimise the best time to re-engage with customers about their next purchase.

The solution is also active in China, where Op2ma set up a Shanghai office and team almost three years ago.

"We are fortunate that our track record of delivering on time and on-budget for our clients in China, in addition to Australia,

has held us in good standing for this new market opportunity"

Marc Brien, managing director of Op2ma says.

"Financial services is a tough area to deliver solutions into.

In Australia there has been significant investment by our team to respond to the demanding needs of regulators that govern the area. Compliance, data security, user management, customer friendly methodologies - all of these have helped us lay the groundwork for a globally competitive solution which is now proving itself in other markets."

The company employs more than 40 staff, with it's head office in Adelaide and branch offices in Melbourne, Sydney and Shanghai.

"We may have to add South Africa to that list after this win" Brien says. ■



Marc Brien



Continued from page 3

"It is finding the right dealer with the right mindset that is the priority."

"I think because we don't see ourselves as Chinese, we see ourselves as a global player. We won't compartmentalise ourselves, (the new dealers) have all been aggressive who are willing to invest with us."

While MG does not see itself as a

Chinese brand, we asked Lenartic if buyers did, and if it matters.

"That conversation around where it is made, is happening even less and less," he says.

"We have two design centres in the UK, we have joint ventures there, we are absolutely on the radar across the world." ■

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CRACK THE CODIFICATION

Franchised new car retailers are very close to seeing reforms that will change the fabric weave of canvas under which thousands of people and businesses operate.

Australia's franchise sector contributes 9% of the country's GDP and franchised dealers tip at least \$13 billion into that, and the reforms to the Franchising Code of Conduct hope to bring order to chaos.

A 49-page Regulation Impact Statement is seeking specific input on 17 questions derived from seven principles found to be key themes drawn from the 2018 Inquiry into the Franchising Code of Conduct. The Senate-led inquiry made 71 overall recommendations, including the creation of the Franchising Taskforce to further consider many of the inquiry's recommendations.

Not all countries have specific franchise laws, but Australia has its own Franchising Code of Conduct which until now has offered little protection for the actual franchisee selling cars to consumers. In submissions to the inquiry by former franchisees it was revealed that franchisees, not just car dealers, felt they lost control of their operations when new business models, products and pricing strategies were introduced by franchisors.

Many solutions put forward by franchisees to these issues were varied in nature, but the majority wanted franchisors to collaborate with their franchise network and seek input on new business models and pricing strategies before implementing them – often with unquantified results.

Some of the 49 options proposed under the Regulation Impact Statement would result in major changes to the Franchising Code of Conduct if adopted.

The “unbalanced” relationship has affected not just car dealers who, in most instances tend to be clever, well-educated business people who often know what they're getting themselves into, however, it also tainted what would have been a harmonious, profitable business model between coffee chains, fuel retailers, branded restaurants, pool cleaning,

car servicing, automotive battery and tyre retailers, and 1160 other Australian franchise systems and an estimated 79,000 franchise units.

The dynamic franchise industry contributes at least \$184 billion to the Australian economy every year, and supports almost half a million employment positions.

And much like car dealers, and the respective automotive associations and representative bodies who also submitted to the Parliamentary Joint Committee in franchising, franchisees revealed widespread discontent with the perceived power imbalance of franchise agreements in favour of franchisors.

Even the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has recommended the reformed code should prohibit terms forcing franchisees to reimburse franchisors for costs that results from needing to preparing the franchise agreement. The ACCC suggested this change on the basis that it may deter franchisees from trying to negotiate fairer terms or make amendments to proposed franchise agreements.

Maddocks lawyers has previously referenced recycling and waste giant JJ Richards, whose standard form contracts used to engage small businesses, the ACCC alleged were unfair and therefore void because under section 24 of the Australian Consumer Law they caused “a significant imbalance in the parties' rights and obligations under the contract”, were “not reasonably necessary to protect the legitimate interests of the party advantaged by the term” and “cause financial or other detriment to a consumer if it were relied on”.

“It is important that franchisors ensure their franchise agreements do not confer excessive rights on the franchisor to change aspects of the franchise relationship, business model or operations manuals without a legitimate business requirement,” the firm says.

“Particularly for the drafting of restraint clauses, geographical exclusivity, leasing arrangements, significant changes to



James Voortman

marketing fund contributions and post-termination obligations,” it adds.

“Given the importance of having franchise agreements that are clear and enforceable, we think it is likely that the perceived power imbalance will reduce over time,” Maddocks says.

The Franchising Taskforce has released its draft Regulation Impact Statement, highlighting seven principles to be the target of reforms to legislation.

The Australian Automotive Dealer Association says among them, the most important principle it is focused on is the obligation for franchisor car brands to offer returns on significant capital expenditure to franchisees – whom will typically put forward millions in infrastructure investment to take on a franchise.

“Franchised new car dealers are required to invest large sums of capital in facilities and equipment, but all too often they are provided with shorter-term dealer agreements, making it almost impossible to recover one's investment,” AADA chief executive **James Voortman** said recently. “The RIS has also provided options to limit the ability of franchisors to unilaterally vary agreements; expand the options for dispute resolution and clarify franchisees rights in terms of goodwill,” he adds.

Under Principle 6, the RIS asks: “Under what circumstances should franchisees be allowed a no-fault exit from the franchise system?”

And in trying to define the term “goodwill” in a franchise agreement, the Taskforce is also asking “how might this be done in practice” and “what would be the costs and benefits of this approach”. ■

CAR LOAN SIMPLIFICATION SYSTEM LAUNCHED

An Australian-first zero ink 'three click' car loan is set to revolutionise the automotive industry, allowing dealerships to green light applications within two minutes.

Developed and patented by emerging fintech company AusLoans Finance Group, the largest privately-owned automotive finance broker group in Australia, the new 'Zink' technology has tripled productivity for its in-house brokers since being rolled-out in October.

AusLoans Finance Group managing director **Rodney Michail** says the company spent two years developing the technology, which it will offer to its workbook of 1100 dealerships across Australia in coming months. Michail says the benefit of Zink is two-fold - it increases productivity while ensuring compliance, a major issue facing the automotive industry in the wake of the Hayne commission and impending new dealership finance licensing laws, expected to be in place by mid-2020.

"We have already experienced a three-time increase in productivity with our in-house team and believe Zink will have even greater efficiencies for dealerships. I am confident in that setting we will be able to double that number again," he says.

"With this technology, you simply take a photo of the customer's driving licence and within two minutes you have a 'traffic light' assessment - green is a go, orange may warrant further investigation and red is, unfortunately, not eligible for a loan at this time.

"For a dealership to make this assessment in that amount of time is a game changer. It will save them - and the customer - considerable time. That assessment would usually require a 30-minute conversation, significant paperwork and could damage the customer's credit file - whereas this process leaves zero marks on their permanent file.

"To be able to do this with no paperwork, in two minutes and then be able to focus on what cars are available to the customer in their budget has the ability to change the way the industry operates. It puts the focus squarely on the customer experience, which is a win-win all around.

Michail says with dealerships likely to require financial licences to offer car loans by mid-2020, Zink is a credit safe option.

"Dealerships are going through the biggest change they have faced in 40 years in the wake of the Hayne commission (led by Australia's High Court justice and royal commissioner Kenneth Hayne) and it is putting pressure on an industry that is already experiencing a tough time, with new car sales falling consecutively for 20 months now.

"Recent Cox Group Research has revealed 16 major issues dealerships believe is restricting their growth - and Zink answers nine of those, including meeting regulations, reducing expenses, boosting consumer confidence and addressing margin compression through new efficiencies.

"When you blend technology with people you significantly boost productivity, customer satisfaction and operational efficiency, Zink has the opportunity to do all those things."

Michail says under the 'three click' system, once eligibility is confirmed, finance options from 40 lenders are offered and car options presented.

"I called 2019 the year of personalisation, and that is what Zink provides, along with complete transparency," he says.

"AusLoans Finance Group has 40 lenders on our books, so instead of a customer being presented with one choice at the dealership, they have a range of options so they can make their own decision based on what best suits their circumstances."

Michail says the 10-strong team that developed Zink is working on final testing for stage two, with a total of seven stages to be progressively rolled-out.

"Our focus is on getting the first two stages out to market- which we believe are the most critical for consumer confidence in this declining market, with stage one the broker application and stage two the customer application," he says.

"While the broker application allows for early assessment efficiencies and in-field capture, the customer application is all about simplifying the process of document collection to improve their experience. We are hoping to bring that to market shortly."

Michail says Zink is also designed to speak to the largest emerging car market - millennials - and has been designed from real industry-use, rather than out of a boardroom without a deep understanding from within the market.

"Most millennials are beginning their car search on their smart phones, so this technology allows them to make their own pre-assessment of their financial situation and cars that suit, increasing their experience when they arrive at the dealership." ■



Rodney Michail

"The feedback so far has certainly been overwhelmingly positive."



THE NTH DEGREE



Brett Jakes

growth, and this growth is expected to continue with more product

updates next year including a number of new X and M models,” JMG says.

The dealership’s footprint will boast room enough for as many as 80 vehicles new and used, with substantial servicing department, and matching staff of 30 – which is another figure expected to grow “as the business establishes itself in the local community”.

That local community is something of an unbridled petrolhead haven. The local Autobarn store is the retailer’s second-biggest for both sales and square metres, and hosts regular carpark meet-ups and show-n-shines with every variety of hot car turning up for bragging rights and a sausage sizzle.

A few minutes up the road at the Eastlink BP service station/McDonalds is a monthly gathering of even more revheads with shiny wheels and thumping exhaust notes.

But Melbourne’s real estate market also means that middle-to-high income earners are also being forced to the outer metro regions, especially as housing developments continue to crop up.

An official open night will be held in mid-December as construction wraps up – hopefully – by year’s end. ■

Munich’s favourite carmaker continues to punch above the weight expectations of the new car market.

Where mass market brands are blocking the economic fracas of consumer purse-tightening, the luxury brands continue to fight hard, and often come out on top. Mercedes-Benz is the best-selling luxury brand, but BMW is right on its caboose, notching a 4.9% reported sales win in October, and cracking the 20,000 units mark for the year – up just half a percent.

It makes perfect sense that Jowett Motor Group would make the investment into building a second BMW epicentre, due to start trading early next year.

This time it’s in Melbourne’s south-east corner of Berwick, along the Princes Highway, 15 years after cutting the ribbon on Waverley BMW, despite actually being in the Narre Warren postcode at 6 Coventry Road.

In the 2016 census, 35% of the working population did more than 40 hours per week, 72% of employed people drove a car to work, 52% of families had children, 47% of homes were mortgaged and 42% had two cars.

But interestingly, nearly 10% of household income was more than \$3000 gross per week, and 16% earned less than \$650. So, despite what is commonly understood to be a lower socio-economic region of Melbourne, there is still a

strong potential customer base ready for some competition - and rightly so given Mercedes-Benz is already in the same geographic pocket, right beside the Monash.

Dealer principal **Brett Jakes**, who heads the Waverley sister dealership, will run the BMW Berwick show, putting his five-plus years with Stillwell Motor Group and five years with Inchcape before that to good use.

“With eight years BMW Dealer Principal experience, including the last two years with me at Waverley BMW, Brett’s track record speaks for itself,” group chief executive **Tony Jowett** says.

“We guarantee a first-class experience for our new customers as well as offering an alternate location for service and purchase for our current customers living in and around Berwick,” he says.

“We want to be heavily involved in the local community supporting the people who we hope will be supporting us.

“I’m excited by the opportunity to build a substantial BMW presence in the South Eastern corridor of greater Melbourne,” he adds.

JMG highlights the BMW brand is coming off two years with several vehicle updates and new product launches, including the X3 M and X4 M SUVs.

“The brand is well positioned for



SAKAI-SEMBOKU DELEGATION RETURNS TO AUSTRALIA

Officials from Osaka's Port of Sakai-Semboku returned to Australia early November to keep updated on vehicle shipping issues. The port exported 42.1% of Australia's used vehicles in 2018. **Kyota Higashino** from the port's business management and promotion division says after Australia stopped manufacturing vehicles domestically in 2017, the port visited Sydney and Melbourne, hoping to do business.

JEVIC New Zealand chief executive **Euan Philpot** assisted with the tour in New Zealand and went with the Japanese team to Canberra for the Australian promotion leg.

"The port of Sakai-Semboku has successfully completed a round of meetings with the Australian government and the Japanese embassy," Philpot says.



The Port of Sakai-Semboku delegation returned to Australia.

"The delegation spent two days in Canberra presenting its case for used vehicle trade liberalisation to key decision makers."

The director general of the Port and

Harbour Bureau of Osaka Prefectural Government of Japan, **Junta Fukui**, led the latest delegation, visiting the department of infrastructure, transport, cities and regional development,

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department of agriculture and water resources, and the trade, tourism and investment division.

They met with the Japanese ambassador, **Reiichiro Takahashi**, and briefed him on Australia's restrictive motor vehicle import practices.

On November 6, the delegation met senior officials from the department of infrastructure transport, cities and regional development, who are in charge of Australia's motor vehicle regulation, and the department of agriculture. Philpot says both discussions were productive and addressed concerns related to restrictive regulation and port handling matters.

Higashino from the Port of Sakai-Semboku business management and promotion division says the port learnt about the new Road Vehicle Standards Act 2018.

"The port keenly wants to increase volume export to Australia," Higashino says. "The port will make any efforts to meet the demands of market and contribution to fulfilling car-life."

Higashino says the delegation did not understand why imported used vehicles were not being accepted in Australia as they meet the six categories, such as performance and environment.

"Even though they are "used," people already know they are functional and structurally safe. Australia imports new vehicles, and they also become "used" in years, the same as imported used vehicles."

The delegation visited the most senior advisor to the minister for trade



The delegation on tour in Australia

tourism and investment, senator **Simon Birmingham**.

Fukui presented the Port's concerns regarding inability to access the Australian used vehicle market and extended an invitation to Birmingham to visit their port and see the used vehicle stock that could be made available to consumers if the Government lifted its restrictions on used vehicle imports.

Philpot calls these discussions with Birmingham and the office "productive" and "fruitful".

The port will have more capacity and potential, planning to expand the land into the Shiomi-Oki district in a few years, Higashino says.

The port exports Japan's third largest number of used cars at 158,000 units, but it is exporting only 1% to Australia. This compares to 17% of the vehicles being exported to New

Zealand, which is only one sixth of Australia's population. Kenya and Sri Lanka are two other main destinations.

About 2051 used vehicles were exported to Australia from the Port of Sakai-Semboku in 2018 – 42.1% of all units. This sits well above Yokohama Port, with 24.1%.

The Port of Sakai-Semboku hope to do more trade with Australia and hope that the

Australian government lifts its restrictions on used vehicle imports.

It is strengthening its facilities for used vehicles. From April this year, its storage yard totalled 720,000 square metres. New heat-treatment facilities have been added in the Shiomi and Sukematsu yards, which have specialised facilities for vehicle inspection and machinery.

"The delegation has now returned to Japan, satisfied that it has put its case for trade liberalisation effectively and clearly," Philpot says. ■



TESLA'S "BAJA RALLY" READY CYBERTRUCK



Tesla chief executive **Elon Musk** says the company's all-electric pick-up truck will be ready to tackle the Baja Rally.

The Cybertruck has been revealed in California, promising fully adjustable air-suspension, dampers, ride height and a superior approach, breakover and departure angle to rival or better other offerings like the Ford Ranger Raptor.

Tesla says the Cybertruck offers 16 inches (40cm) of ground clearance - better than the Raptor's 28.3cm - and gives 35 degrees of approach, and 28-degrees of departure angle, both also better than the Blue Oval's "off-road warrior".

"It'll basically be able to do the Baha rally," Musk says tongue-in-cheek.

Musk says he's particularly proud that the overall dimensions of the Cybertruck are less than a conventional pick-up truck but can offer 1.98 metres of tray area, and says it will even tap into the adjustable air suspension to offer an on-board compressed air supply to inflate tyres. The reveal event also showed a video demonstration of a tug-of-war with a Ford F150 pick-up where the Cybertruck's instant torque easily overwhelmed what is the best-selling vehicle in the US.

Cybertruck's maximum towing capacity is cited as 6.35 tonnes (14,000lb), with a payload of 1587kg (3500lb) on the top-spec model, or 3.4 tonnes of towing on the base-model.

"The top three selling vehicles in the US

are pick-up trucks, so we have to have one ... but they all look pretty much the same," he says.

"This looks nothing like any other pick-up truck," Musk attests.

The extremely angular Cybertruck's body design also boasts a superior monocoque chassis design using high-strength steel that enabled Musk to demonstrate live hitting the vehicle's panels with a sledge hammer on stage. Having also hit a conventional pick-up's passenger door several times leaving large, virtually irreparable dents, the Cybertruck, as

Musk describes, is "a truck you can take a hammer to, won't scratch, and a 9mm bullet shot at the door the skin is so strong it is basically bulletproof."

Three Cybertruck models will be available, including the top-spec 500+ mile range, tri-motor, all-wheel drive version capable of 0-100km/h sprints of 2.9 seconds (costing US\$69,900/ A\$103,000). The Cybertruck range will start at US\$39,900 (A\$58,700) with a

250+ miles of battery range for a single-motor rear-drive layout.

The conclusion of the reveal also announced Tesla's foray into the motorcycle market, with Musk almost forgetting: "Oh, we also made an ATV".

A four-wheeled ATV was ridden onto the stage and up on to the Cybertruck using built-in ramps where: "You can load an ATV or dirt bike on the back and adjust the suspension, and it'll plug-in and charge in the Cybertruck," Musk revealed. Tesla is now taking orders for the Cybertruck. ■

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Tesla CEO Elon Musk says Cybertruck looks nothing like the rest.



SELLING HEAVY CARS PUMPING UP EMISSIONS

Australia's real-world emissions are trending upward and show no signs of slowing down as brands and dealers continue selling heavier cars to demanding consumers.

University of Technology Sydney adjunct professor **Robin Smit's** report, *Real-World CO2 Emissions Performance of the Australian New Passenger Vehicle Fleet 2008-2018*, has found the 19.5 million cars on our roads are emitting record levels of carcinogens, carbon dioxide, and fine soot particles.

Despite the introduction of Euro 5 emissions standards and the widespread adoption of fuel-saving engines and transmission technology from vehicle manufacturers, such as direct-injection, continuously variable transmissions (CVT), variable valve timing, turbocharging, and stop-start engine shutdown and cylinder deactivation features on many models, emissions continue to rise. Why?

"There is a general expectation and acceptance that mean CO2 emission rates of the Australian new passenger vehicle fleet will autonomously reduce over time, due to technological improvements enforced by overseas vehicle emissions legislation," Smit reports.

"This assumption is likely incorrect, and that CO2 emissions performance

of new passenger vehicles has, in fact, stabilised, and increased in recent years. This creates a significant policy issue," he explains.

Smit's 24-page report which draws on data and analysis from the EPA, ClimateWorks, the Bureau of Infrastructure, University of Queensland, the Australian Greenhouse Emissions Information System, the statistics bureau, the National Transport Commission and many more, says Australia nationally remains hands-off in its approach to plugging tailpipe emissions.

"Australia does not have mandatory fuel efficiency and/or CO2 vehicle emission standards, which are internationally recognised as a key and fundamental policy measure to reduce GHG emissions," Smit writes in the introduction. "The majority of state and territory governments across Australia have either announced or are developing zero emission and/or electric vehicle policy frameworks," he acknowledges.

"There are, however, no co-ordinated national policy measures in place in Australia that specifically mitigate CO2 emissions – or rather greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from road transport," Smit explains.



Robin Smit

The professor says available evidence shows emissions continue to increase every year due in part to Australia's

national fleet distance-travelled average rising from 142 billion kilometres in 2000, to 176 billion kilometres in 2016 - and CO2 dominates the greenhouse emissions from Australia's road transport, at an estimated 74.8 million tonnes of "carbon dioxide equivalent" or CO2-e emissions entering the

atmosphere annually.

Diesel passenger vehicle sales have increased dramatically in the last 10 years as well, which is another factor blamed for Australia's emissions increase.

Diesel passenger vehicle sales made up 12% of the 2008 fleet, increasing to 19% in 2012 and remaining "more or less stable" from 2013-2018, fluctuating between 17-18%, the report notes.

However, those diesel vehicles, including medium and large SUVs, duel-cab utes and people movers, "are, on average about 40% heavier than petrol PVs".

The diesel-only Toyota Hilux and Ford Ranger remain the two most popular vehicles sold in Australia, while other prominent diesel models including the LandCruiser and Prado, Hyundai Tuscon

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Total real-world CO2 emissions from passenger vehicles are estimated to have increased roughly 10% in the period 2008-2018, from about 37 million tonnes in 2008 to 40 million tonnes in 2018.



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and Santa Fe, Kia Sorento and Sportage, the Mazda CX-5 and BT-50, the Holden Colorado, Volkswagen Amarok, Isuzu D-Max and MU-X, Nissan Navara and X-Trail, remain among the most popular vehicles routinely sold in Australia – all with diesel engines either optional or exclusive.

Light commercial diesel sales are the dominant powertrain preference going back years, with over 40,000 new diesel LCVs sold in 2019 thus far and over 63,000 reported sold in 2018.

But the overtaking of SUVs from passenger cars as the preferential consumer choice is supporting the emissions increase – almost 200,000 petrol SUVs were sold privately last year and they've just passed 170,000 year-to-date in 2019.

Other diesel vehicle design parameters also adversely affect CO2 emission rates, the report shows, such as having a higher proportion of 4WD vehicles, with 15% higher engine capacity and a lower proportion of CVT transmissions.

"A climate friendly and low greenhouse gas emission image is incorrect for Australian diesel cars," the report says. Smit's report suggests using fleet average data to track emissions, which shows Australia's average fleet emissions as trending downward from 2006-2015 before plateauing in 2016 is inaccurate when compared to real-world data from the NTC which shows CO2 has increased since 2014, and from the Transport Energy/Emission Research organisation which shows CO2 in 2018 surpassed

levels recorded in 2008.

The report also finds that engine downsizing from 2008-2018 has seen mean engine capacity and number of cylinders in vehicles purchased has reduced 13% and 8% respectively, showing a trend to reduce the engine size of the passenger fleet.

Performance of those engines has also increased slightly overall by 3% in that 10-year period, however, weight has dramatically increased, nullifying those increases in efficiency and output.

"Both tare weight and gross vehicle weight have consistently increased over the period 2009-2018," the report says.

Tare weight has risen by 15%, gross vehicle mass (the maximum legal mass a vehicle is allowed to weigh) has grown by 17%, which "is well known to strongly affect fuel use and CO2 emission rates, as heavier vehicles require more energy to move," the report states.

"Vehicle manufacturers have not applied changes in vehicle specifications in a way that would have consistently improved fuel efficiency and reduced CO2 emissions," the report explains.

"This is likely caused – to some extent – by a lack of nationally coordinated policy measures and incentives in Australia, such as mandatory GHG emission or fuel efficiency standards for new motor vehicles."

Total real-world CO2 emissions from passenger vehicles are estimated to have increased roughly 10% in the period 2008-2018, from about 37 million tonnes in 2008 to 40 million tonnes in 2018. ■

A NIGHT AT THE BOOM-CRASH OPERA

Ever been killed in a car crash? It's the \$4.34 million question, because that's the monetary burden one fatal crash puts on the government, our economy and every other taxpayer. And it's set to get worse before December 31.

That unnecessary glance, that slip in attention, the monumentally stupid decision or your inability to sufficiently risk-manage a situation unfolding in front of you.

We haven't even got to the emotional trauma one fatal car crash costs a wide network of people who have to find a way to pay for your funeral, then sit through it, and pretend getting on with their daily lives without you isn't the hardest thing they've ever done.

Or perhaps you're the one who walked away. Except you don't just walk away without psychological damage akin to returned servicemen and women.

Nobody brushes off the effects of a fatal car crash.

And it's December now. Entering the Christmas-new year period where, statistically, there will be horrific road crashes reported in the weeks before that day you're supposed to sit down with family and friends, eat more than your body is designed to, sleep on the couch and crack a beer.

But some families won't be doing that – they'll be making calls and picking music; probably hating Christmas for a very long time.

Which is why the work being performed by the engineers, data analysts and technicians at Crashlab in Sydney and APV Tech Centre in Melbourne matters.

They're commissioned by the Australasian New Car Assessment Program to smash new cars into objects, and objects into new cars, to subject them to the kinds of forces only felt by

the bodies of air force pilots, F1 drivers and extreme sports nuts.

The Anthropomorphic Test Device, aka crash test dummy, is one of the most impressive developments in the automotive industry. Forget autonomous emergency braking and electronic stability control, because the ATD processes information

inputs from a car crash scenario in the same way Data from Star Trek could hack the Enterprise on a whim.

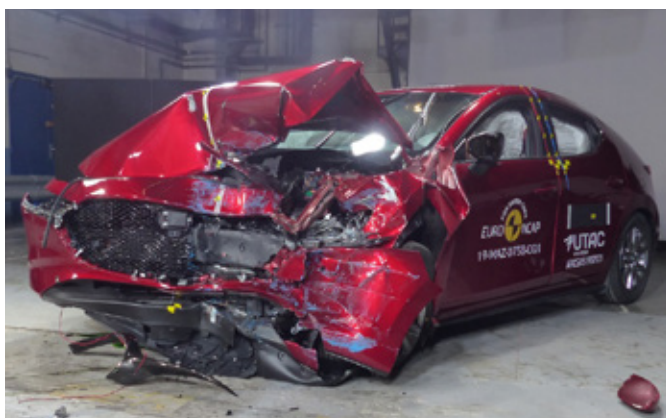
AutoTalk was given special access to the frontal offset crash test of one of the newest vehicles coming to the Australian market, in one of the most popular segments for consumers – the small SUV. **But to be honest, it's not the first time witnessing a crash test – that was three years ago – and much like the realities of watching a proper car crash, you don't forget it.**

This amphitheatre full of high-speed cameras, an enormous array of flood lighting, and what looks like a medieval torture apparatus, but it has more in common with a surgeon's OR than an arena full of starved lions.

It often eludes the public as to why crash tests aren't "more realistic" of real-world crashes, anecdotally, like hitting actual trees at 85km/h, fitting bullbars to 4WDs for crash testing, or ramming two vehicles into each other (although that has been done before, but not for developing a crash rating score).

People who didn't go down the STEM subject line at school tend not to understand the prime directive in science and engineering called the "scientific method".

If ANCAP tries to produce a crash rating for the latest Kia Seltos without gathering "clean data" for the purposes of developing an evidence-based conclusion about how it performs in a



Who is your sacrificial lamb? The car or the cared-for?

Continued on page 15

controlled, repeatable crash test, then the results hold no credibility and can be disputed or even possibly lead to legal disputes.

crash test, but around 100 channels of data is collected in a frontal offset test," ANCAP tells *AutoTalk*. "Each test type has a certain dummy

is important because materials like plastics in the bumpers, headlights and grilles, all behave differently at varying temperatures, as to metal components in engine bays, panels, steering and suspension parts. The dummies also record injuries the same way; too cold and they're more resistant to forces, too hot and they're too flexible.

"More recent dummies have data acquisition built in, while others like child dummies have data gathering computer modules installed in the boot," ANCAP reveals.

And if you think you'd survive an ANCAP crash in the real world, you might be right. But the customer you just sold that second-hand, eight-year-old Holden Barina to, for a profit, might find themselves in a crash where the brake pedal they push gets hit so violently it rams the steel bracket backward by 45mm and upward 14mm – enough to cause horrible damage to the muscles in her legs. It's entirely likely the steering wheel intruding 50mm is enough for her forehead to impact it through the airbag and leave her concussed.

It's ANCAP's mission to change the way cars are built. And it should be a dealer's responsibility to encourage consumers into the safest vehicles they can afford.

All crash labs have long checklists to ensure vehicles are tested with the greatest of accuracy, using a combination of the lab's own procedures and ANCAP's, to make sure every step is identical every single time.

"It's a very thorough process, which has up to 10 specialists depending on the crash test," ANCAP says.

Tests are designed to represent the higher end of survivable crashes on a seat-belted occupant; they're not supposed to replicate that bloke who T-boned four cars on the Monash Fwy,

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ANCAP engineers must get it right, for when we get it wrong.

Simply throwing a base Seltos into a concrete cube at 100km/h in the same way fifth gear did with old Fiestas many years ago is not a credible example of the scientific method.

Waiting for the moment of truth, standing in a sealed viewing room, as if preparing to watch some modern-day automotive public execution, there's a tension in the air.

The vast hall goes silent. Office and ancillary lights go down and the theatre spotlights power on, like the engine array on an imperial battle cruiser, doing their best to imitate a small sun.

To the uninitiated, knuckles are white and mouths are covered by nervous hands. Then comes the whoosh, as if a life-size Scalextric model is rushing into view from the darkness.

It soars into a collapsible aluminium honeycomb block at what feels like warp speed. A crackling boom sprays plastic and glass fibres into the air, as metal folds and rubber tyres bounce squeakily across the stage.

It's done.

In the 15 milliseconds of a crash, airbags fire at over 300km/h and catch the G-force imposed on the human body. However, they cannot stop the internal collision between organs and bones, which is why a family of ATDs collect huge amounts of data.

"The number of data channels varies based on the dummy and the particular

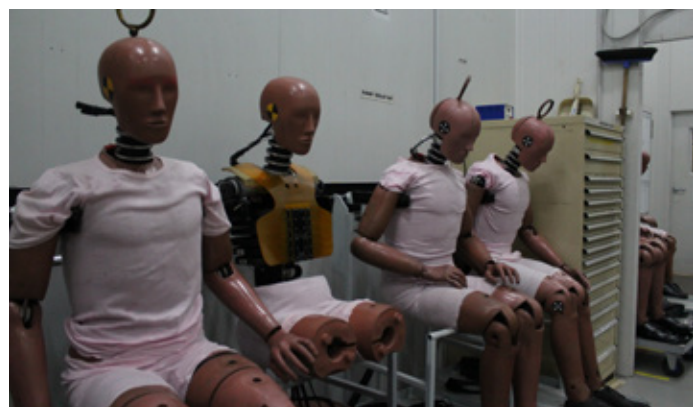
In the 15 milliseconds of a crash, airbags fire at over 300km/h and catch the G-force imposed on the human body.

configuration which is also dependent on particular tests, so the frontal offset uses two 50th percentile males and a 10-year-old and 6-year-old child dummy," they explain.

But dummies are not just belted in and fired into a wall. This is science. Strict protocols dictate the exact testing procedures the dummies are subjected to, meaning they can literally be repeated in any other lab, in any other country, by any other competent engineers.

The exact positioning of dummy, their size, their injury measurement thresholds, the temperature controlled lab, the positioning of the vehicle on its winch cables, all have to be precise and identical to every other dummy in every other crash test performed.

There is a three-hour window in which a dummy can be sitting in a vehicle before it compresses the springs in the seat beyond an acceptable test limit. Temperature



"Ever been killed in a car crash?" Nobody ever answers yes.



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nor emulate a four-wheel drive hitting a Corolla.

"A non-ANCAP demonstration test we performed about two years ago on a [previous-generation] five-star Toyota Camry test at 60km/h passed," ANCAP highlights.

"But at 100km/h it was a total write-off injury result, it was completely unsurvivable. At least in a five-star car at a lower speed this at least offers a reasonable benchmark for survival."

ANCAP says speeds will increase over time as cars become stronger, better designed and engineered.

Next year the frontal offset test speed will increase from 50km/h to 60km/h.

There are thousands of variables in a car crash. It's a split second of absolute chaos, where the most extreme of forces, numbers and examples barely quantifiable physics are played out. It takes about 4000 newtons of force to break the typical human femur, and one cubic inch of bone can withstand the weight of five standard pickup trucks, making it stronger, ounce-for-ounce than steel. But crashing in a 2011 Holden Barina will still cause that young P-plater's leg nearly 2000 newtons of force.

It's more than most mortals can fathom. Which is why ANCAP tries to simplify the turmoil into something as simple as a rating.

Imagine being an ANCAP or affiliated engineer, who sees the crash credibility of the cars surrounding them, watching that car tailgate them on the freeway, or trying to get their kids to school in the same traffic as you.

"We do have an intrinsic appreciation for the safety standards for the cars around us every day," ANCAP says. "We know the work we do has changed the landscape of the cars we drive." But, as ANCAP tested vehicles emerge in showrooms around the country, responsibility is building on Australia's dealership network to prioritise safety – not margins – in the vehicles they're offering customers.

And that obligation also falls to used dealers, parents, fleet managers and employers. Because the cost of putting safety second means that someone who someone else loves, never gets the chance to answer that first question or say merry Christmas in 2019.

And that, is the real tragedy. ■



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FEELINGS MEAN A DRIVERLESS FUTURE MAY NOT BE SMOOTH

by **Raul A. Barreto**
Senior Lecturer University of Adelaide



There is a reasonable expectation that autonomous vehicles (AVs) will dominate the future of transport.

Utopian visions suggest these driverless vehicles will lead to dramatic changes to our cities and their transportation.

AVs operating on a network would allow traffic to move safely and seamlessly through cities. They would use less space per vehicle. Traffic flow would be unhindered by traffic lights or other traditional driver signals.

More efficient transportation would use less fuel. Urban spaces could be repurposed as parking needs virtually disappear.

But this vision depends on a range of factors. In particular, these predictions largely rely on how car drivers respond to the advent of AVs.

Our research suggests people's attitudes to driving and their cars could limit the predicted benefits to traffic flow and city efficiency, at least during the initial transition to driverless vehicles.



We measured flows through these intersections on a typical day. Using minute-by-minute real-time data, monitored at traffic signals, we created a picture of typical traffic flows into and out of the CBD.

We also surveyed commuters to discern their transport preferences versus their perceptions of the hypothetical future.

Combining this information, we then describe possible outcomes of the transition to automated vehicles.

Key results are shown below.

Attitudes and costs will shape transition

Two observations flow from the responses.

First, it seems likely drivers' prevailing attitudes to vehicle ownership may be influencing their attitudes to autonomous vehicles. For many, their car represents a status symbol. They feel a

strong personal attachment to it. Second, cost may be a crucial factor in take-up of driverless vehicles. As costs fall, most commuters might bow to financial pressure to shift to autonomous vehicles. However, a minority might

What did the research look at?

The research uses the city of Adelaide as a test case. We surveyed commuter preferences for the acceptance and use of driverless vehicles, as compared with their current preferences.

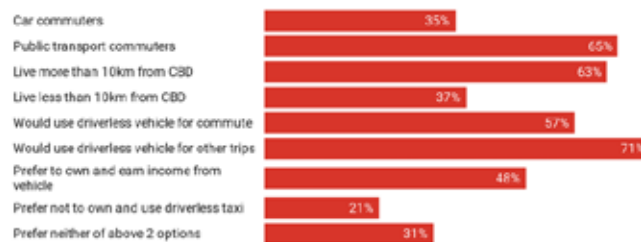
We then developed two scenarios. One is for the medium to long term, when vehicles are fully autonomous. The other is for the short-term transitional phase, during which a mix of conventional and driverless vehicles share the roads. Using traffic-flow data for Adelaide, we analysed the implications of a shift towards driverless vehicles for:

- Traffic flow
- The number of vehicles needed to service commuter demands
- Parking
- Broader land use in the city centre.

Adelaide is unusual, as a result of its history as a planned city, in having a discrete number of entry and exit points. This allows us to map more accurately average daily traffic flows in and out of the city centre.

Our analysis focuses on three of the city's gateways, as shown below.

Adelaide commuter survey results



What did the survey find?

Above is a summary of the survey of a representative sample of 526 regular commuters into the Adelaide CBD.

Data: How Might Autonomous Vehicles Impact the City?

We queried respondents' willingness to carshare by taking advantage of common knowledge of real-world company Uber. We also investigated respondents' attitudes by positing a scenario in which driverless vehicles are the norm and conventional driving is a luxury. We assessed likely resistance to AVs by considering their willingness to pay to continue to drive traditional vehicles in this scenario.

lobby to keep a mix of driverless and conventional vehicles on the road.

Our analysis suggests Adelaide could reduce its current vehicle fleet by as much as 76% in the Utopian driverless future. This is due to current high car dependence and long commuting times and distances at peak periods.

Yet some predicted benefits, notably the very large reduction in vehicle numbers and better traffic flows, might not be achieved in the near to medium term. This is due to uncertainty about how the transition to a totally driverless city will be achieved and how long it will take. ■

DEALER RESILIENCE: REDESIGNING NETWORKS TO IMPROVE FLEXIBILITY

Australian car dealerships have seen a number of changes over the past few years, resulting in the ongoing decline in new car sales for 19 consecutive months.

A number of economic and environmental factors such as higher vehicle import taxes, ASIC's ruling on financing, and the rise of mobility as a service has meant Australians are being more cautious in their spending.

The good news is that dealerships are here to stay. But like any other industry, car dealers need to find ways to adapt to new market conditions and customer expectations in order to remain resilient.

Balance 'in store' with digital experience

With consumers spending an average of six weeks researching before even setting foot in a dealership, dealers can't afford to save their first impression until a face-to-face meeting.

Today, consumers are already well informed when they enter a dealership as - thanks to websites like Glass's Guide and online marketplaces like Gumtree Cars - all pertinent buying information is available at the click of a button.

Because research offers a wealth of expert and buyer reviews, digital channels can replicate or supplant much of today's buyers' purchase processes.

Car dealers who manage to jump on this bandwagon and implement a holistic digital strategy and listings on third party websites can benefit from these developments, as they are able

to connect with customers in this new space.

What's more is that the actual showrooms need to become part of this transformation as well. One in five Australian car shoppers say their needs are not met by dealerships. To meet customer expectations, vendors need to better use the tools digital transformation can offer.

A great example are Audi's virtual showrooms in London, which have been transformed into an almost digital marketplace. Only a handful of cars are on display, with giant video screens displaying relevant buying information.

Additionally, dealers are well-advised to emphasise their individual message and offerings across all marketing outreach.

While OEM-compliant advertising may have its upsides, dealers should take initiative and go out with their own personalised, store-specific marketing messages that align to all other aspects of their outreach (eg, social), create a streamlined campaign and establish a concise, authentic presence.

Direct selling

New Gumtree research has revealed that while 56% of vehicle purchasers claim to rely on a dealership having a physical presence, just over two in five consumers would also consider purchasing a vehicle directly online.

In response to consumer-driven expectations to research and buy online, companies have already begun selling cars directly through their respective websites and social media accounts.



by **Richard Dicello**,
Head of Motors,
Gumtree Australia.

Car dealer RD Whittington sells cars through his Instagram account and has established himself as the go-to account for high-performance, expensive, high-horsepower cars typically from Europe. Like most other retailers in industries that have been disrupted by technology, the dealership now has to transform their role in order to connect with an increasingly digital-savvy customer.

However, this doesn't mean that dealerships will cease to exist altogether. There are many points in the customer journey that dealers can capitalise on to complement their online offering.

Customers would struggle to test drive cars without a dealership network in place and adopting online-only sales could seriously harm less populated locations with less incentives to service.

Instead, dealers need to expand their business models to accommodate the new, digital customer without losing sight of their "traditional" consumers; and take it one step at a time. A dealership might not be equipped for direct selling yet, but having an online presence with transparent listings in place is definitely a step in the right direction.

Integrated CRM

For those looking to take these steps, having an integrated Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool is a great way for dealers wanting to build their businesses.

The CRM is a shared repository of customer information and analytics that can be useful for lead generation and marketing, providing touchpoints for follow up contact with customers - both in the digital space and in-person.

With the customer needs at the heart of every car purchase, a strong CRM system is a great tool dealers can use to find out more about their customers in order to provide better, more personalised service

Continued on page 19



Gumtree Cars ambassador Grant Denyer (left) with Richard Dicello, Gumtree's Head of Motors.

TRACK YOUR LEADS: REDUCE ADVERTISING WASTE

Our column last month looked at the importance of running advertising that is “always-on” to ensure you are constantly present at every touchpoint of a customer’s journey toward vehicle sale. However, how do you truly know where your customers are coming from and which of your advertising is delivering the greatest return?

There is a multitude of sources from where leads can come: From searches, listings, websites, and digital advertising; through to database marketing campaigns, print and radio ads. So, given the level of investment required to run successful advertising campaigns, it’s vital to be able to accurately track the advertising origin of your leads, and establish which have become showroom visits, test drives, and sales, otherwise you could be tearing up money and missing real opportunities to sell more cars.

Case study

A real-life example where lead data was able to give a more accurate measure on advertising performance came from a dealership that had recently implemented call tracking technology. This telephony solution involved establishing a multi-channel phone system that both identified the campaign origin of a lead, as well as the keywords that had been searched by the customer prior to calling.

When measuring the budget applied to his search engine marketing (SEM) campaign against website enquiries, the dealer’s marketing agency found that one particular keyword was delivering a very high cost per acquisition (CPA) of \$75.47. As a result, they recommended the removal of this keyword from his SEM campaign.

However, when the dealer measured the results against both website conversions and his call tracking data he actually found

that that same keyword was delivering the best return of the campaign, with a CPA of \$12.22.

This example shows how vital it is to be able to accurately measure the origins of all of your leads, to enable you to make more informed decisions about how to invest your marketing budget to get the best return.

So, what tools are available to enable you to fully understand your business’ marketing performance?

There are two key tools that all dealerships should invest in, in order to arm themselves with a full view of all their marketing performance: A call tracking solution and an attribution platform.

Call tracking

Despite all our technology and automated systems such as chat, SMS, email etc, Google has found that 60% of searchers are still likely to call a dealership when given the option. Despite popular belief, data has shown that since the introduction of call buttons and “click to call” functionality on websites, search listings and social media, phone calls to dealerships have actually increased by as much as 22% in the last four years. This means that a significant number of the telephone calls you are receiving, are a direct result of the advertising you are running in the digital sphere.

It is important to understand what is driving those calls so you can accurately measure where your advertising dollar is best spent. Establishing a multi-channel phone system within your dealership enables you to apply a different phone number to each marketing stream including display and social ads, email marketing, print media etc, and then track which campaign is generating calls.

This technology can also assign a single phone number to each visitor of your



by **Gavin Cox,**
Adtorque Edge

dealership’s website, meaning that all their online activity - including searched keywords- prior to them calling, is traced.

Lead dashboards/ attribution platforms

A number of providers in the auto industry are now delivery marketing dashboards and attribution platforms to clients with the aim of delivering more insight into lead tracking.

Some of the most effective attribution platforms are able to provide a single view on all leads received by the dealership and what their origin was. They can then match this against test drive and car sale data to give a full customer journey profile. Such data is invaluable when it comes to making decisions about how and where to spend your marketing budget to ensure the greatest return on investment for your dealership.

Given the competitive nature of the automotive industry, and the need for “always-on” campaigns, it is imperative that dealers have a clear and accurate understanding of which types of advertising work best for their target market, so that they can spend their marketing budgets wisely.

You can no longer afford to make decisions without hard facts, so, equip yourself with the data you need to get the most out of your advertising. Your marketing agency should be able to provide you with this information, and if they can’t, find one that can. ■

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– but only if it is used correctly. Research from the US suggests that only 13% of sales reps actually use the full capabilities of their CRM, and Gumtree research shows that dealers tend not to invest heavily in CRM. If used correctly, however, the CRM

is a great way to highlight and create relevant (digital) touch points with potential customers, such as on third party websites and via newsletters, and to better connect with customers. In short, car dealerships will continue to play a significant role as primary channels for building personal contact and relationships with customers.

Staff will have to shift their mindset from a traditional customer service role, to a skill set that includes building on “soft” skills like communication and problem solving. In order to future proof, dealers need to redesign and expand their infrastructure and develop a digital and CRM ecosystem, to improve flexibility and accessibility for all customers. ■



FORESTER GT LIVES ON



by **Scott Murray**,
Editor

This time of year a tsunami of “car of the year” awards proliferate the interweb and leach their way into prime time morning telly, and I’d rather watch concrete set, mostly because they get it wrong.

Too many say they want performance, yet when they’re given it, practicality has disappeared; ditto the reverse. So-called rating systems put cars down for not being comfortable enough, or not prioritising safety, or chastise a brand for not adding enough luxury features – and above all else, they never run short of breath whining about a car being too expensive, or they disregard cost when the consumer isn’t the remit.

One award winner in early 2019 was supposedly best car on sale in “Straya”, yet it was a small luxury SUV starting at \$45k and smacking into a \$57,000 ceiling before on-road costs; and only its

top-spec all-wheel drive variant has been crash-tested, you only get a space-saver spare wheel, basic cruise control (not the adaptive kind without optioning), and \$990 for 360-degree camera even on the \$57k top-spec, on a “luxury” SUV claiming to be one of the safest on the roads seems misguided.

How can that be the best new car option for Australian families offloading their actual hard-earned money?

Subaru sold 1500 Foresters last month and the up-market competitor only sold 200, and you can extrapolate those numbers out to annual sales.

But the 2.5i-S specifically does something special. Where its longer brethren the Outback 3.6R and L models have a mechanical growl upon start-up, the Forester S is a properly snarling machine that warns the soft-roading pretentious aristocracy to kindly get out of the way. The Forester remains one of the best-selling mid-size SUVs on the market for a reason, and the S revives a character trait missing far too long from the Subaru range – the hot GT.

There was once a time you could barely hear a Forester GT burbling up the street before it whooshed by in a blur of faded



Forester GT was the first: an icon of Sports Utility Vehicles; a legend.

jungle green and you’d catch a glimpse of that orange GT badge on the left-hand side of the tailgate.

It may wear a different name, but my week-long test courtesy of Subaru Australia, revealed the 2.5i-S is actually a GT underneath.

Living in automotive exile, trapped in the industry’s equivalent of **Tom Hanks’**

The Terminal, unable to reveal its true self or declare its good intentions to be a no-holds-barred raggedy, rugged enthusiast’s SUV, the Forester S cannot be officially declared a GT.

This is a terrible tragedy because on the winding foreshore road between the Mornington Peninsula’s Safety Beach and Mount Martha, when you miraculously have no traffic in front and the undulations, lefts, and rights simply open out in front of you – the S reveals its true colours.

The “S” button tempers it. You get a touchier throttle response that is much sharper than the L or base model and you certainly feel the potential speeds attainable with one of – if not the - best-developed all-wheel drive systems on the market.

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Bigger boot than almost every segment rival.



EyeSight is always watching.

Continued from page 19

None of that waiting until you've already lost grip on a slightly gravel surface – having ultimate potential traction at all times means you can reverse the jetski down the famous Safety Beach boat ramp at the Yacht Club and Mount Martha Marina without under-cooking it in front of all the hot, impatient Jeeps, LandCruisers and Rangers waiting.

I implore someone in the caper of motoring reviews and their subsequent awards to finally give the Forester the adulation it damn-well deserves.

It has so much boot space – 498 litres seats up and 1768 litres seats down – it is only pipped by the vast Chevrolet-based Holden Equinox and Jeep Cherokee.

You can reach the top tether anchor point with one (short) arm over the top of the seat without having to unpack the and climb into the boot, vision is excellent especially through the crisp high-quality rearview camera, and the seats are weirdly comfortable.

How much more evidence is needed? Its 1.5 tonnes of towing capacity may not make it the heaviest hauler in the class, but it doesn't need to be since even a single-axle Jayco Crosstrak caravan weighs just 1350kg with a 150kg downball weight right on the Forester's allowable limit.

But the Forester's glaze cherry is its EyeSight safety assistance system which is still second to none. The 2020 Forester feels even better again than the MY19, which admittedly could have been having driven the resident MY18 Outback a lot recently. Either way, something felt very different driving Forester S on freeways, residential streets, and that twisty beach road.

A set of Bridgestone Duellers in highway variant tested here never give any suggestion of not keeping up with demand, and a set of all-terrains would only add to Forester's prowess for getting that little bit further up the trails or scaling the slippery boat ramps.

Not wanting to further inflate Subaru's tyres in any way, there's an instinctiveness and seamlessness about the dance moves

as you take off from the lights, accelerate, enter the freeway, blend into at-speed traffic, change lanes, flick-on adaptive cruise (and EyeSight's subsequent primed-and-ready features) and overtake traffic en route to the beach.

It's as if there's been even more R&D invested into making EyeSight (version 2020) communicate even better with the CVT, throttle and engine, without becoming some over-compensating flashing, beeping and "all-hands-to-battle-stations" piece of false-positive inducing junk.

A particular favourite is that, in keeping with its GT-in-spirit retro-inspiration, there's a CD player ready to welcome Daryl Braithwaite's *The Lemon Tree* or Linkin Park's *Hybrid Theory*.

Speaking of which, there's even an "e-Boxer" hybrid engine for Forester supposedly coming next year which will make this car even more of a compelling family SUV offering.

The Forester may not beat its chest or strut its stuff like the rest of the SUV horde, and it certainly doesn't get the so-called best car adulations it has earned in its clever packaging, top-notch safety and realistic pricing, but think how easily we forget what a brilliant actor **Tom Hanks** really is.

If I had a 2019 Car of the Year award to don, and I can say this without taking a single cent from brand advertising, it would be the Subaru Forester 2.5i-S, for reminding us why the GT was so loved and managing to be Woody to the Buzz Lightyears in mid-size SUVs. ■

It has so much boot space – 498 litres seats up and 1768 litres seats down – it is only pipped by the vast Chevrolet-based Holden Equinox and Jeep Cherokee.



Tony Webber

SLUGGISH SALES FOR 20TH CONSECUTIVE MONTH

Australian vehicle dealers hoping to see a boost in pre-Christmas sales may be disappointed if November's figures are anything to go by.

November's 84,708 new vehicle sales are a 9.8% decrease on the same time last year and mean it's the 20th consecutive month of declining sales.

The November results from the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI), the peak body for the automotive industry in Australia, confirm continuing sluggish new vehicle sales in the Australian market. On a year-to-date (YTD) basis, total sales for 2019 have been recorded as 978,628 units, an 8.2% decrease on YTD 2018.

"It is a tough market – full stop," FCAI chief executive **Tony Weber** says.

"The industry has been looking for a lift for some time now and has activated multiple levers to achieve some stimulation, including incentives, sales and special vehicle editions. However, the appetite for new vehicles remains suppressed," he says.

"On the bright side, there has never been a better time to purchase a new vehicle.

"With over 60 brands and more than 350 models, the Australian market is one of the most competitive in the world. This is great news for consumers who have an abundance of choice and pricing options when it comes to selecting a new vehicle.

"Now, with the holiday season upon us, is a great time to act."

Total sales for the month in the passenger vehicle segment totalled 23,022 (down 21.3% over November 2018), with 39,541 in the

SUV segment (down 1.1% on November 2018) and 19,065 in the light commercial vehicle segment (down 8.8% on November 2018).

The Toyota Hilux (3687 units) was the top selling vehicle in November 2019, followed by the Ford Ranger (3491), the Mitsubishi Triton (3123), the Hyundai i30 (2339) and the Toyota RAV4 (2316).

Toyota remained the top selling marque for the month with 16,954 sales for 20% market share, followed by Mitsubishi with 6861 (8.1% market share), Hyundai with 6821 (8.1% market share), Mazda (6167 sales for 7.3% market share) and Kia (5141 sales for 6.1% market share).

Diesel and petrol vehicle sales are hard hit again in November, falling in nearly all categories except for private light commercial petrol – up about 40.5% in November 2019 to November 2018 comparisons and nearly 50% YTD.

However, sales of electric vehicles (EVs), plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and hybrids continue to rise across all new vehicle sectors. Sales of new vehicles dropped across all states and territories.

The biggest falls were, unsurprisingly, in the main vehicle purchasing states of New South Wales and Victoria.

November sales in NSW were 26,863 – down 2705 on November 2018 (9.1%) and also down 9.1% on YTD sales (312,00 compared with 344,469).

In Victoria, November sales were 24,400 – 10% down on November 2018 and 8.1% down YTD.

SUVs remain popular, showing the least decline in sales compared with other segments.

The November 2019 SUV sales figures of 39,541 show a 1.1% decline compared with November 2018, and a 3.1% decline YTD. But passenger vehicle sales were down the most at 23,022 for November 2019 – a 21.3% drop on November 2018 and 16.5% fall YTD. ■



TOP 10 BRANDS



1. TOYOTA 188,457



2. MAZDA 91,594



3. HYUNDAI 80,765



4. MITSUBISHI 76,178



5. FORD 58,461

TOP 10

MODELS

SMALL SUV



1. TOYOTA HI-LUX 3,687



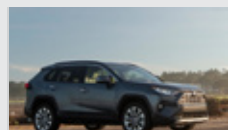
2. FORD RANGER 3,491



3. MITSUBISHI TRITON 3,123



4. HYUNDAI i30 2,339



5. TOYOTA RAV4 2,316



6. TOYOTA COROLLA 2,229



7. TOYOTA CAMRY 2,001



8. NISSAN X-TRAIL 1,882



9. MAZDA CX-5 1,735



10. TOYOTA LANDCRUISER 1,641



1. HYUNDAI KONA 1,303



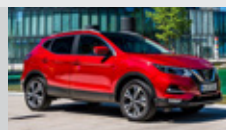
2. MAZDA CX-3 1,107



3. MITSUBISHI ASX 1,027



4. KIA SELTOS 898



5. NISSAN QASHQAI 873



6. HONDA HR-V 825



7. SUBARU XV 740



8. TOYOTA C-HR 635



9. SUZUKI VITARA 471



10. MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE CROSS 453

TOP 10 BRANDS CONTINUED



6. KIA 56,563



7. NISSAN 46,626



8. VOLKSWAGEN 45,852



9. HONDA 40,256



10. HOLDEN 39,969

EVS AND HYBRIDS CONTINUE TO CLIMB

Sales of electric vehicles (EVs), plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) and hybrids continue to rise across all new vehicle sectors while their petrol and diesel equivalents fall. That's according to new vehicle sales figures for November 2019 released by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI).

Hybrids are hitting the high notes, recording generous sales increases in most categories.

For instance, hybrids in the non-private passenger segment show 2026 sales for November – up 95% on November 2018's 1039 and a 70.4% increase year-to-date (YTD), going from 7540 in 2018 to 12,849 this year.

They've rocketed in the popular SUV categories too.

In the private SUV segment, hybrids have leaped from just 46 in November 2018 to 638 in November 2019 – up more than 999%, while YTD figures are nearly as good, up 675.1% from 610 in 2018 to 4728 this year.



Hybrid SUVs in the non-private sector have gone up 708.6% in November comparisons (58 to 469) and 292% in YTD comparisons (865 to 3391).

Electric vehicles and PHEVs are making giant strides too, but not quite in the same numbers.

In the private passenger sector, electric/PHEVs go from 20 in November 2018 to

73 in November 2019 – up 265%, while they rise from 228 in 2018 to 454 in 2019 (99.1%) in YTD comparisons.

Hybrids in that same segment go from 502 in November 2018 to 764 in November 2019 (52.2%) and from 3613 in 2018 to 6103 in 2019 (68.9%) in YTD sales figures.

In the non-private passenger category, electrics/PHEVs rise from 26 in November 2018 to 105 in November 2019, up 303.8%, and from 372 to 533 YTD (43.3%). **Rises are also recorded for sales of SUV electric/PHEVs in both the private and non-private segments.** They go from 27 in November 2018 to 61 in November 2019 (125.9%) and 172 in 2018 to 739 in 2019 YTD (329.7%) in the private category. And in non-private sales they climb from 29 to 81 in November comparisons (179.3%) and 465 in 2018 to 960 in 2019 YTD (106.5%). The only other segment to record electric/PHEV vehicle sales is the non-private light commercial category which sees one sold in November 2019 compared with none for the same month in 2018, YTD totals showing a near doubling from 14 in 2018 to 26 in 2019 – up 85.7%. ■

NEW VEHICLE SALES BY BUYER TYPE AND FUEL TYPE						OCTOBER 2019		
	Month		YTD			Variance +/- Vol. & %		
Total Market	2019	2018	2019	2018	MTH	YTD	MTH	YTD
ELECTRIC/PHEV								
Passenger Private	73	20	454	228	53	226	265.0%	99.1%
Passenger Non-Private	105	26	533	372	79	161	303.8%	43.3%
SUV Private	61	27	739	172	34	567	125.9%	329.7%
SUV Non-Private	81	29	960	465	52	495	179.3%	106.5%
Light Commercial Non-Private	1	0	26	14	1	12	-	85.7%
Sub Total	321	102	2,712	1,251	219	1,461	214.7%	116.8%
HYBRID								
Passenger Private	764	502	6,103	3,613	262	2,490	52.2%	68.9%
Passenger Non-Private	2,026	1,039	12,849	7,540	987	5,309	95.0%	70.4%
SUV Private	61	27	739	172	34	567	125.9%	329.7%
SUV Non-Private	81	29	960	465	52	495	179.3%	106.5%
Sub Total	2,932	1,597	20,651	11,790	1,335	8,861	83.6%	75.2%
TOTAL	3,253	1,699	23,363	13,041	1,554	10,322	47.8%	79.2%

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

Carsales campaign draws mass registrations

The Carsales "Epic Car Sale" saw nearly 10,000 pre-registrations within the first 24 hours as consumers checked out the offers being made by Fiat, Chrysler, Jeep, Alfa Romeo, Holden, Suzuki, Nissan, Renault, Jaguar, Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz and Volkswagen.

Australian new car sales in October recorded a 77,803 unit deficit against the same period in 2018, despite the optimistic expectations of passing one million sold for the year.

"We like the idea of trying new ways to stimulate the market so more event style campaigns, whilst not planned, may well be repeated," Carsales industry relations general manager **Agostino Giramondo** says..

"With the 24 hour news cycle and the constant mood shifts consumers have towards the economy, we felt it was important.

"We are all a part of the automotive industry, so if it's important for our customers (B2B and consumer) then it's important to us to give a leg-up to the car industry," he says.

The Epic Car Sale concluded on November 23 at midnight.

NSW Police minister's road-rage fracas

New South Wales Police minister **David Elliot** has conceded that he blew up at a teenage driver during a road rage fracas.

The Australian reports that having told the P-plate driver who clipped Elliot's car door mirror and left the scene that he "worked for the cops", the teenager asked him to present his "badge" ID, to which the minister admits to saying : "I pay for the badges, I don't get one".

Elliot reported the teenager to Castle Hill police station, while the teenager's parents reported his conduct to police also. The teen's father said Elliot should have simply taken his son's registration and reported the incident – action the police minister should have been well aware of.

"I could hear this fellow yelling and screaming [on the phone]," the teen's dad says.

"I think in this day and age when road rage is quite high-profile, it is poor form by someone in that position," the father adds.

Elliot told the newspaper the teenager refused to provide his details, to which he made the statement about being a policeman when giving his business card to the teen. He says he wasn't chasing because "we were going in the same direction", instead suggesting he "only stopped to ask to exchange details when we both parked at traffic lights".

He also claims the teenager also swore at his wife and was abusive, having done up to \$1000 damage.

Mobile trade training benefits Queensland apprentices

TAFE Queensland's unique fleet of mobile trades training vehicles are providing flexible and convenient training for young apprentices according to the states minister of training and skills development.

Minister Shannon Fentiman says TAFE Queensland's eight specialist mobile trade training vehicles cover more than 20,000km every year, delivering specialist education in the automotive, construction, plumbing and heavy vehicle sectors.

Employers that benefit from the TAFE Queensland's workplace training include Origin Energy, Regional councils, Isuzu, Volvo and Star Entertainment group. The vehicles will be expanding across the state and are adapting to new technologies so everyone in Queensland can access quality training.

Fentiman encourages the 38,000 year 12 graduates who have just finished high school to consider the careers an apprenticeship can lead to.

Under 21s are offered free apprenticeships, with up to 172 qualifications on offer in the industries, where Fentiman says there will be jobs available.

"This is an innovative way that TAFE can ensure young Queenslanders can gain the best skill and training at an industry level," she says.



What women want: The Mazda3

The Mazda3 has been named "supreme winner" at the 2019 Women's World Car of the Year awards.

Established in 2010, the awards are voted by a panel of female judges from over 30 countries that base their voting according to criteria women use when buying a car.

The model also won Women's World Family Car of the Year.

According to Mazda, the overall form of the model presents a simple and single motion, but its subtle undulations bring the design to life, resulting in a natural and powerful expression of vitality.

The Mazda3 incorporates Mazda's Skyactiv-Vehicle Architecture, designed to help people to make the most of their natural sense of balance.

Cybertruck for rent

A Tesla Cybertruck ute is offered on Australian electric car rental service Eevee – the catch is customers must wait about two years.

Alan was the first Australian Tesla Model 3 owner to list his Model 3 on Eevee, and as soon as he ordered a Cybertruck he put that up to share as well – from 2022 for about A\$360 daily compared with A\$290 daily for his Model 3.

Evee says the Cybertruck has polarised the public, but the best way to test your feelings is to rent one for a few days.

"Many have said that it's grown on them ... so perhaps try looking at it until you like it." ■