More than ever in the new normal post COVID-19, alliances between car manufacturers will be critical to ensure that mass-market production can continue.

Alliances do have their ups and downs as we’ve recently seen with Renault–Nissan–Mitsubishi in what is now a new post-Carlos Ghosn era.

Before Ghosn became the chief executive officer of both Renault and Nissan in May 2005, the first person to lead two Fortune 500 Global companies simultaneously, he was known as “Le Cost Cutter” at Renault and the Keiretsu Killer at Nissan.

There is no doubt Ghosn had an ego which may have led to his downfall. History tells us he was offered the top job at the ailing Ford Motor Company in 2006 but turned it down because he wanted to be both CEO and chairperson. Bill Ford Jr was not about to relinquish the chair, and still hasn’t.

Anyway, digression aside, the Alliance recently announced a leader–follower strategy which will be applied to 50% of its new models in development by 2025. Standardisation will be pushed further from platforms to upper bodies, and in each product segment the leader company will develop and engineer a vehicle for all three brands with support from the follower companies.

The Alliance says it will continue to build on product sharing in light commercial vehicles but its commercial partnership with Daimler AG has come to an end.

In May, Mercedes–Benz called time on the X-Class Ute which was built alongside the Nissan Navara and the Renault Alaskan at Nissan manufacturing plants in Barcelona, Spain and Cordoba, Argentina. Despite huge marketing efforts the Benz 1–tonner never took off.

Following the introduction of the Renault-supplied Mitsubishi Express van to the Australian market, it is not unlikely that a future Navara, Triton and Alaskan might sit on the same platform much like the new Mazda BT-50 and Isuzu D-Max.

Mitsubishi has previous form in “badge engineered” cars and utes. The Fiat Fullback pick-up marketed in the UK and Europe is essentially a rebranded Triton.

Let’s also not forget the past collaborations between Mitsubishi and Peugeot/Citroen which saw the Mitsubishi Outlander, ASX and i-Miev morph into the Peugeot 4007, Citroen C-Crosser, Peugeot 4008, Citroen C4 Aircross, Peugeot Ion and Citroen C-Zero.

The Alliance says the new leader–follower scheme is expected to deliver model investment reductions of up to 40% for vehicles fully under the scheme.

Each company will focus on its core regions with the aim to be among the most competitive and to serve as a reference point for the others.

Nissan will be the reference point for China, North America and Japan; Renault in Europe, Russia, South America and North Africa; and Mitsubishi Motors in ASEAN and Oceania.

That Navara badged Triton is looking pretty likely I reckon.

Meanwhile, a light commercial and EV alliance between Ford and Volkswagen, means the next Amarok will be developed and built entirely by the Blue Oval on a new Ranger platform. Ford will also develop vans for the two brands.

Volkswagen will supply the EV chassis from its 100% electric i.D family to Ford so it can develop and market vehicles for Europe which will sit underneath its flagship EV, the Mustang Mach-E.

But the big daddy alliance of them all will be the forthcoming 50/50 merger between Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) and Groupe PSA (Peugeot, Citroen, DS, Vauxhall, Opel).

The potential savings the merged entities are going to be able to make through the rationalisation of platforms, engines, transmissions, electric and electronic architecture as well as staff and manufacturing plants will be enormous.

There will be pain for many as the company’s transition post-merger but for the consumer there will be added value and greater efficiency.

Enjoy your reading this month.
Earlier this year the McGrath Subaru Dealership in Liverpool NSW enjoyed another successful evening at the 2019 Subaru Retailer of the year Awards. Dealer principal Greg Hook again took home for the team, the Sydney Retailer of the Year award for the fourth time in five years.

Hook was also awarded the National Quality Retailer of the year award as well as re-stamping his membership into the 1000 Club for the sixth year running. He joined only five other dealerships throughout Australia who sold more than 1000 new Subarus in 2019.

He attributes the dealership’s ongoing success to the retention of its 40-strong long-serving staff that make up the whole dealership and their dedication and focus on customer experience and satisfaction.

“Subaru is a unique marque where most of our models are all-wheel-drive, that sets us aside from most other marques in the market today,” Hook says.

“It gives us the opportunity to create a uniquely positive experience from our first contact point all the way through their ownership cycle which results in a lot of our sales coming from our repeat customer base and referral business."

“We commissioned our Liverpool showroom specifically for the Subaru brand, our staff and customers love the atmosphere which it creates and we have been very honoured to have so many of Subaru Australia and Subaru Japan senior management visit us,” he says.

Subaru began operations in Australia in 1973, the brand reached 100,000 sales in 1987 and became exclusively all-wheel-drive in 1998 until they introduced the BRZ into the model line-up.

In 2019 McGrath Subaru Liverpool was also bestowed the surprise honour of selling the one millionth Subaru sold in Australia.

“From a simple handover, it became something that the [one millionth] customer says she will remember for life. Attention to the smallest details in making the day a success was a hallmark of every team member involved and showed a

THE KEY TO QUALITY LIES IN CONSISTENT EXECUTION

McGrath Subaru Liverpool dealer principal Greg Hook says that staff retention and a relentless focus on customer service and satisfaction are keys to running a multi award-winning dealership.
commitment to quality that shines through in every customer interaction.” Subaru Australia says.

Hook says being the dealership to deliver the one millionth Subaru vehicle in Australia was a very happy and unexpected event because it could have happened to any of the more than 120 dealers throughout Australia.

“We were having a very good month and when Subaru Australia notified us we were the selling dealer of the one millionth Subaru in Australia we were all over the moon,” he says.

The car in question was a Subaru Forester 2.5i-S purchased by Jennie Truong of Fairfield East, NSW.

At the time both the customer and dealership staff were unaware of the significance of the transaction, salesperson Pola Abdula delivered the Forester to Jennie in the normal manner, going through the dealership’s usual process of explaining all the car’s features and benefits.

To mark the occasion after the car was delivered, McGrath Subaru invited Jennie, husband Phillip, daughter Jessica and son Thomas back to the dealership for an official handover ceremony.

Subaru Australia managing director Colin Christie, new vehicle manager Bill Psomos and salesperson Pola Abdula welcomed the Truong family back to the dealership for the ceremony along with dealership staff and Subaru Australia Sydney team members.

In recognition of the importance of the millionth car sold in Australia all were honoured that Subaru Corporation chairman Yasuyuki Yoshinaga presented the keys of the Forester to Jennie and her family. They were also gifted a 10-day trip to Japan, including Tokyo and Kyoto for all the family.

Colin Christie says the Australian distributor was honoured that chairman Yoshinaga made time in his schedule to come to the special dealership ceremony.

“It went over incredibly well, Jennie and her family were all quite overwhelmed by all of the special attention and the amazing gift of a trip to Japan for the whole family,”

“For me seeing Jennie and her family so happy and hosting the Subaru chairman was a huge honour.

“I had previously met Mr Yoshinaga in his role as Subaru Corporation’s managing director when he presented me with both the National Retailer of the Year as well as the Sydney Retailer of the Year awards in 2016.

“It’s not often if ever that you have Subaru royalty visiting your dealership.”

Hook says that he and the whole McGrath Subaru team are looking forward to achieving even greater results for them and their customers in the coming years.

“Safety and achievement are in our DNA,” he says.
PERSEVERANCE AND SELF-BELIEF PAYS OFF

Maserati Artamon employee Adriano Giorgi has won the Maserati Australia after sales manager of the year award in the two years since it was established. His automotive career began at age 13 and wasn’t always smooth sailing.

Adriano Giorgi started his automotive career by working for an Ampol Garage in Concord West during his school holidays from the age of 13. During his first year the mechanic misunderstood his name and called him Andrew because Giorgi says he was too scared to correct him. His duties were cleaning the workshop and the resident dog, as well as carrying out light mechanical work when an extra (and smaller) pair of hands were needed.

“It was a tough career introduction, but it laid the foundations of my strong work ethic, which has undoubtedly led me to success,” he says.

Giorgi’s first mechanical job was removing the cylinder head from the engine of a KB Ford Laser with zero direction. It took a lot of trial and error and about 60 hours of labour for which he was paid $1 per hour. Unlike today he says, back then the variables didn’t matter.

Cleaning the workshop floor with caustic soda was not only unpleasant it wrecked his safety boots and Giorgi bought a new pair every six months, saving several weeks wages to do so.

“Despite the seemingly harsh and exploitative conditions, I valued what I was learning more than the time spent or money earned there,” he says. “I am actually grateful as it taught me discipline and skills that I use to this day.

Giorgi started his apprenticeship at the Ampol garage but left in his second year as his employer was paying him under the award wage and refused to rectify this.

He says this was a crucial lesson in career progression, “because there comes a point when you need to know your worth, your rights and whether somewhere else will pay off in the long term.”

“It also made me highly aware of how to be a mindful manager, rewarding and acknowledging my team, being aware of where they’re up to on their own journey and what I should challenge them with next, and paying respects where they are due, he says.

Giorgi says that he has embraced the twists and turns of his dynamic automotive career, from servicing everyday cars to restoring and maintaining classics and supercars.

“It’s a real treat to be able to work on and drive so many cars that I grew up idolising – cars that I genuinely never even thought I would see,” he says.

Giorgi says he is extremely grateful to have the position of aftersales manager.

“By nature, I like to do things a little differently, and encourage my team to speak up with new ideas. If things can be done better, we will implement it – we won’t just talk about it, he says.

“I have an internal drive to be the best, and working for some of the world’s most powerful brands, with my team being some of the most driven and resourceful people, I always push myself further. We have a mentality of success being the only outcome.

Giorgi says it is teamwork that is the key factor to running a successful and award-winning after sales operation.

“We run a small team that have a constant desire to be better. How you climb a mountain is more important than reaching the top, and will ultimately determine if indeed, you make it to the top,” he says.

Giorgi says there are two main key performance indicators (KPI) set by the manufacturer that determine the award the aftersales teams compete for.

One is based off workshop performance and the other is a composite of certain metrics and customer satisfaction.

“The second set is usually more difficult, as they are based on emotion and perception. Most of us have a technical background, and sometimes these are the most difficult to implement strategies for,” he says.

“However, the clients are reassured in knowing that their vehicle is being looked after by the best there is.

“The KPIs are achieved not through rushing at the end of the month to meet a target, but taking the necessary individual steps every single day to ensure we are consistent, with no surprises when that monthly report comes through,” he says.

Outside of working hours Giorgi produces a podcast called Lifestyle Pirates, and is a signed artist and music producer with an EDM group called Elucidus.

“The music and production industry is something completely different to the automotive game, and somewhere I can have a different creative outlet,” he says.
HOW PEOPLE WANT TO BUY CARS POST-COVID-19

Head of Gumtree Cars (a division of Gumtree Australia) Richard Dicello says consumer sentiment towards buying cars has changed drastically and quickly in a post COVID-19 world.

Prior to COVID-19, consumer attitudes and behaviours toward buying cars and vehicle maintenance were fairly consistent. Consumers purchased their vehicles without having concerns about the buying process, the cleanliness of the dealership or their vehicles and the impact of a global pandemic on their finances. Cleanliness was reserved primarily for the household, and consumers only thought about physical safety in the context of safety ratings and car crash safety features.

As a result of COVID-19, consumer attitudes and behaviours toward the automotive industry, and car-buying in particular, have changed drastically within a very short amount of time.

Gumtree Cars conducted a COVID-19 Consumer Sentiment Survey to shed light on new consumer demand and to help car dealers adapt as they get back into gear.

CAR INTENDERS ARE STILL KEEN TO BUY

As part of the research, Gumtree has been tracking the anticipated delay in vehicle purchases as a result of COVID-19.

In positive news for dealers, the survey revealed that 95% of Gumtree car buyers are still actively looking to purchase their next vehicle, despite the COVID-19 disruption.

The survey, which was conducted from April 30 until May 18 with 2758 Australian respondents, reports that only a small minority of car intenders are postponing their purchase. 87% of car buyers stated that they still intend to purchase a car within the next three months.

Key reasons to delay a car purchase that were listed are concerns around test-drives, concerns around non-essential travel and wanting to ask specific questions about the car in person.

The outbreak has significantly changed how Australians think about—and shop for—the cars in our lives. However, the survey also revealed that certain aspects of the car-buying journey remain unchanged by the pandemic.

Amongst the vast majority of Gumtree’s car intenders, their reasons for buying a car have not shifted as 76% of buyers say there is no change in their reason for buying a car; with replacing or upgrading their current vehicle remaining top of the list for vehicle purchases.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ARE THE NEW NUMBER ONE

However, other aspects of the car buying journey are quite different now compared to a few months ago. Gumtree’s survey highlights a host of new issues and priorities that car dealers must factor in and adapt to in order to meet new customer demands.

The most impactful change COVID-19 has brought on is a new customer-demand for safe trading, with potential car buyers asking dealerships to take social distancing very seriously.

According to the Gumtree survey, today’s buyers expect COVID-19 safe protocols as the new way to trade and they believe they are here to stay for the foreseeable future.

In order to drive car buyers into their dealerships, dealers are well-advised to expand their offerings to include 1:1 appointments and virtual video inspections, safe test drive options and remote 3rd party inspection and additional finance options as well as free return periods.

Additional asks include comprehensive car cleaning and disinfectant solutions, clear dealership opening and service times and overall dedication towards following the Government’s social distancing rules.

By prioritising the implementation of safe trade measures, dealerships have the opportunity to eliminate customers’ concerns that would otherwise lead them to further delay their car purchase.

Other markets are reporting similar trends: A global survey conducted by consulting business Capgemini with more than 11,000 consumers from 11 countries found that health and safety concerns will continue to shape consumer behaviour even after this crisis subsides.

A NEW VERSION OF THE DEALERSHIP

The “new normal” will certainly continue to see the adoption of digital technology, given numerous trends showing an increase in online shopping. That said, consumer sentiment indicates that dealerships are here to stay with a slight positive shift in buyer preference for the dealer showroom.

However, it is also becoming clear that car buying is not returning to business as usual. Only dealerships who understand what customers want and adapt to a clean and safe way of selling cars will be able to bounce back.

For those who do this well, they will likely experience a boost in sales in the upcoming months.

THE AUSTRALIAN USED VEHICLE MARKET MARCH TO MAY 2020

Cox Automotive Australia Retail Solutions through its brands, Digipurple, Dealer Solutions and Kelley Blue Book has compiled a market insights report of the effects of COVID-19 on the Australian used vehicle market from March to May 2020.

Cox Automotive Australia Retail Solutions chief executive officer Michael Sommerton says the insights report on market trends are thankfully showing signs of recovery.

“In the case of the used car market, the trend activity on delisted vehicles is the best it has been in 12 months,” Sommerton says.

Delisted vehicles are an indicator on the volume of vehicles being sold in a given month.

“Buyers have returned to dealership websites to research, browse, and buy cars with solid increases in engagement, leads, and conversions,” Sommerton says.

“There is no doubt, the market has dramatically shifted and the way in which we buy and sell cars will be far more digital and contactless than ever before,” he says.

Sommerton says that now more than ever Cox Automotive is focussed on partnering with OEMs and dealers to help make intelligent decisions and informed choices through digital channels.

“The market never really went away. It did get smaller, but in-market buyers were ready to pull the trigger. We actually had...
to act quickly otherwise we would lose the sale to another dealership," a South Australia dealer says.

MARKET TRENDS SUMMARY
In the used car market rolling averages staged a positive turnaround from the start of May and continue strong upwards trends exceeding previous highs for many of the rolling average indicators.

On average it took 26 days for dealers to sell vehicles in May 2020 compared to 18 days during the same period in 2019.

Digital advertising is costing less and delivering more. Due to a decrease in digital buying across Google and Facebook, dealers who continued to advertise saw lower marketing spend and better performance.

Dealer website customers shifted to more serious buyers across the Cox Automotive network which led to a jump in lead to sales conversions from chat and form submissions.

USED VEHICLE MARKET PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT
Following the decline in delisted vehicles with the effects of COVID-19 lockdown and expected negative buyer sentiment in late March, rolling averages staged a positive turnaround from the start of May and continue strong upwards trends exceeding previous highs for many of the rolling average indicators.

Although mid-April is known for a short downturn with the Easter period, delisted vehicles slowed well ahead of Easter. Despite long-term uncertainty over COVID-19 the market recovered by week one of May to normal levels as it did in 2019 post-Easter.

Cox Automotive sees a continued demand for vehicles pushing the 7, 14, and 30 rolling averages beyond the usual rebound. Some of the reasons for this trend could be due to the discounted prices dealers have offered to reduce growing stock levels, buyers holding back sales since February, or the availability of cash from early superannuation access under COVID-19 legislation.

May 2020 reported an 88.4% increase in delisted vehicles compared to April 2020. Compared to the same period last year, the number of delisted used vehicles increased 33% from May 2019 to May 2020.

There was a 13.2% decline in active used vehicle listings in May compared to April 2020 but a 7% increase in active used vehicles listings in comparison to May 2019.

On average, active used vehicles were listed in the market for 26 days in May compared to April 2020 which reported an average of 24 days. In May 2019, active used vehicles were listed for 18 days.

Cox Automotive says by reviewing the last six months of price points at which vehicles were delisted and applying a 14- and 30-day rolling average (to allow for the effects of COVID-19), it sees a buyer preference/stock availability for cars in the $23,500 to $24,000 range.

CONSUMER ACTIVITY AND BEHAVIOUR INSIGHTS
Cox Automotive has more than 700 websites across its dealer platform and says despite the sharp drop in April compared to March, the recovery in May has been impressive.

There was a 59.9% increase in unique visitors across the website platform in May compared to April, and customer engagement strengthened during the peak of the COVID-19 period with customers viewing more pages and spending more time of dealer websites in April and May compared to March 2020.

Tracking closely with unique visitors to websites, total leads also dipped 14.29% in April compared to March before recovering strongly, up 35.7% in May 2020.

The fall in leads was not as large as the drop in total visitors. This, combined with the page view and time on site numbers, indicates that customers who remain in market are of a high quality.

Leads from vehicle detail pages increased by 51.5% from March to May 2020. The Utes and 4WD categories made up 47% all of vehicle searches on the dealer website platform directly correlating to the introduction of the government’s instant asset write off scheme.

THE POWER OF DIGITAL ADVERTISING
Due to lower costs in digital advertising and a decrease in purchasing competition in May, dealers who continued to advertise on Google and Facebook saw up to twice the return on website traffic, page views, total sessions, calls and engagement compared to dealers who paused all digital marketing during COVID-19.

Analysing website chat and form leads from a group of new car franchise websites, it was found that these leads converted to sales on average at 34%.
Carsales.com.au says it has set a new record in May 2020, achieving a unique audience (UA) of 4.8 million people, according to Nielsen’s digital ratings monthly report.

The UA was 35% higher than May 2019 and the Ford Ranger was the top new vehicle searched online.

The website says it served 33.3m sessions in the month – also up 35% on the same month last year.

Visitors to carsales.com.au spent an average of more than 37 minutes onsite over the course of the month, the company says.

“There’s a genuine intent to buy that’s underpinning the unprecedented period of car-shopping activity,” carsales chief marketing officer Kellie Cordner says.

“It’s providing dealers and brands with both immediate sales opportunities and prospects to keep warm over the coming months,” Cordner says.

The carsales editorial audience also grew in May. A new record unique audience of 1.4m engaged with editorial content against carsales auto sites (carsales.com.au and motoring.com.au).

Carsales reports it is the preferred new car destination and interest in soon-to-be released cars is soaring with 61% of intenders shopping at carsales when looking to buy a new car.

It says its new car content has also come out on top against key competitors as the most enjoyable (75% surveyed), the best quality reviews (60%) and the most interesting (79%).

“The unique connection of carsales editorial content to dealer and automaker inventory cements its increasing importance and influence in the car-buying journey,” Cordner says.

“With just one click on carsales, buyers can transition from researching a car via editorial content, to browsing a dealer or an automotive brand’s virtual showroom and making an informed purchase decision – all from the comfort of home.

“Our written and video reviews and comparison tests continue to inspire and educate a broad range of Australian car shoppers about the merits of different models, makes and segments – whether they be consumers with limited auto understanding or those more knowledgeable.

“The record engagement with carsales editorial content highlights how important it is to have new cars available on site for consumers to research and purchase.

“90.1% of searches on carsales listings don’t specify new or used vehicles, or they select both new and used,” Cordner says.

The sizeable increase in new car research and shopping activity comes at a time when social distancing measures have been eased and many buyers have re-evaluated their transport preferences, carsales says.

It also says the extended Instant Asset Write Off allowance and the usual strong run into the end of financial year are also likely to have contributed to the record level of audience and engagement.

The Ford Ranger, Mitsubishi Triton and Toyota HiLux were the three most popular new cars searched on carsales in May 2020.

Key models in the medium SUV segment were also well represented in the carsales top 20, with the Toyota RAV4, Volkswagen Tiguan, Mazda CX-5, Mercedes-Benz GLC-Class and Hyundai Tucson all featuring.
MG Motor Australia has appointed five new dealer partners to its growing sales network. The new dealerships, all in Victoria, include the now open Brighton, Mornington and Shepparton locations, with Bendigo and Mildura to open later in June. This expansion brings MG Motor’s national dealer network to 57 sites.

MG Motor Australia and New Zealand chief executive officer Peter Ciao says the brand has been working hard to best support its dealer partners.

“We’re making further investment in Australia through this expansion, with our dealerships positioned at key locations across Victoria for our growing customer base to access,” Ciao says. “We look with optimism to the future ahead which includes the range topping MG HS, as well as our all-electric ZS EV arriving in Q4 2020. We’re bringing our new and trusted dealer partners on the MG journey as we continue to grow in this market.”

There are now 14 MG Motor dealerships across Victoria, providing full sales, service and aftersales care. Each new dealership will offer MG’s full range of vehicles, including the MG3 Auto, the MG ZS SUV, and its new offering, the MG HS SUV. MG Motor offers a seven-year unlimited kilometre warranty and a seven-year roadside assistance package.

Ciao says the COVID-19 pandemic has tested the Australian automotive industry for many months at a business and personal level, and he says never before has community, compassion, support and pulling together been so important.

“MG stands united with its dealerships in its optimism, and hopes for a brighter second half of 2020 for our customers and community,” Ciao says.
NEW GUMTREE MD SEES BRIGHT ONLINE FUTURE

Gumtree Australia’s newly appointed managing director Mark Kehoe says he sees a bright future for the online business.

Kehoe says he joined the business at a critical moment for Gumtree as social distancing drives a step-change in consumer behaviour that could see more Australians demanding the convenience of online buying and selling.

He was one of the founding members of online retailer and auction house, GraysOnline, and a former head of digital at Virgin Australia and, most recently, executive director at Flamingo AI.

Kehoe says he will be focused on driving prioritisation for motors, delivering growth on the platform and cementing Gumtree’s position as a trusted, local community marketplace.

“We are seeing a significant shift in consumer behaviour as a result of COVID–19 as more Australians look to shop locally and online. It is a pivotal moment for the business, where there is an opportunity to leverage our leadership in this space for buyers and sellers alike,” Kehoe says.

“I’ve worked in digital and ecommerce businesses for more than 20 years, and at Gumtree I’m excited to be leading an iconic brand benefiting local Australian communities.

“Gumtree plays an important role facilitating safe trading in vibrant, local communities, providing economic opportunity for Australians and delivering scale and insights for partners.

“I’m eager to contribute to the development and growth of the brand to solidify Gumtree’s position as the go-to online trading destination for all of life’s needs.

“This role is more important than ever as online consumer behaviour goes through a step-change as Australians emerge from COVID–19 restrictions and continue to look for ways to connect in their community, support local economies and make some extra cash,” he says.

BLINKER SEES 52% INCREASE IN DEALERSHIP ENQUIRY

Australian car subscription software provider Blinker.com.au says it has seen a 52% increase in enquiries from car dealerships since the lockdowns came into effect.

Blinker says the pandemic has led to consumers being more wary of taking on car loans, and changes in work habits has contributed to the decrease in new car sales around the country.

Hence, Blinker has announced its biggest platform update yet for dealership customers.

The release includes a major design refresh and enhancements to allow car dealerships and OEMs even more control over individual subscriptions.

Blinker says the platform can now be integrated with other third party automotive, CRM and notification software, ensuring the solution fits seamlessly with existing software used by car dealerships.

A new dashboard feature gives each client a detailed overview of their organisation’s subscription programme at a glance.

Dealerships can now check credit and fraud risk indicators in real-time with the advanced proprietary credit assessment algorithm.

Blinker chief technology officer Jeremy Gupta says the new platform has been honed through working with dealership groups around Australia to develop a product that suits their specific needs.

“We have redesigned the platform in response to feedback and insights directly from dealer customers, providing them with the tools to completely own the relationship with consumers,” Gupta says.

“The updates include the ability to have custom branding on communications and tailored subscription plans, whilst we have also introduced a raft of algorithm upgrades to equip businesses with accurate, real-time data to make informed decisions about potential subscribers.

Gupta joined Blinker.com.au in late 2019 and has been involved in the development of this updated cloud-based platform. He was previously CTO at Cox Automotive Australia and specialises in leveraging technology to transform organisations, with a focus on enhancing customer experience.

Blinker managing director Michael Higgins says the new platform will also see benefits for consumers with car subscription now available at more local dealerships around Australia.

“By far the highest demand we’ve seen is for customers looking to subscribe to hybrid and electric vehicles. With subscription, this means people can stay up to date with the latest in-car technology which we know is the most important thing new car buyers look for,” Higgins says.
Subaru and Peugeot–Citroen distributor, Inchcape Australasia Limited (IAL), has appointed Colin Christie as its new managing director.

Christie was the former MD at Subaru Australia. He will now oversee all of IAL operations including Subaru Australia, Subaru New Zealand, and Peugeot–Citroen Australia (PCA), along with the group’s retail operations and AutoNexus the logistics provider.

Christie also assumes the role of Subaru Australia chairman. The IAL executive team will report directly to Christie.

Christie has worked with Inchcape for 24 years, the past three as Subaru MD. Before that he was Subaru’s sales and marketing director, and previously held senior roles in finance, aftersales and other roles across the Inchcape group.

Inchcape Australasia’s current finance director Christian Dinsdale is promoted to the role of Subaru Australia MD. Dinsdale has worked across various operational and finance roles at Inchcape for the past 10 years, including the role of Subaru general manager finance and operations.

PCA marketing general manager Kate Gillis becomes a member of the IAL executive team in a newly created role of PCA general manager.

Gillis started with Inchcape in November 2017 as marketing GM for the Trivett retail business, moving to PCA as marketing GM in July 2019.

She has a background with global consumer brands, including 17 years with Waterford Wedgwood, and three years as marketing director of Europe, Middle East and Africa for the Wedgwood, Royal Doulton and Waterford crystal brands.

Subaru Australia marketing general manager Amanda Leaney receives the added responsibility for centralised marketing to her portfolio, including customer journey, consumer planning and insights.

Leaney joined Subaru in 2005 as national retail advertising manager. Since then she has covered multiple roles, including national marketing manager, national digital and network marketing manager, national advertising manager and national product training manager.

Before joining Subaru, Leaney worked in London as a communications coordinator for the Department of Health, following marketing and communications roles across various automotive retail companies, including Inchcape Automotive Retail.

The latest Inchcape changes follow the announcement in February of George Ashford’s promotion to the role of APAC chief executive officer which includes reporting lines from Australia and New Zealand.

“These latest changes enable us to reshape and redesign our broader business as we move into a new era,” Christie says.

“We will be able to leverage our scale, capability and alignment across distribution, logistics and retail to achieve fantastic outcomes for our people and customers alike.”

The Australasia marketing director and PCA acting managing director Ben Farlow is departing the business, following the structural changes outlined above.

IAL APAC CEO Ashford praised Farlow for having made “a very significant contribution to the development of our marketing and digital capabilities during his tenure”.

“I would like to take the opportunity to thank Ben for his achievements. He leaves a very positive legacy at Inchcape having developed people, capability and delivered great outcomes. We wish him every success in the future,” Ashford says.
Cox Automotive company Dealer Solutions is launching new market insights platform for used-car data called AutoRadar.

Gillian Allen, product manager for AutoRadar, has been working with her team of data engineers to develop a product that delivers intelligent insights with a live market view and inventory analysis tool to allow dealers to optimise their pricing strategy.

AutoRadar leverages dealer used cars that are aggregated through the Dealer Solutions’ inventory distribution platform and can provide insights on dealer’s inventory regardless of which advertising destination vehicles are listed on.

“We have been engaging key customers via a pilot programme for many months. The programme has allowed us to capture and implement feedback to ensure we launch a product that provides all the features dealers in Australia are used to with similar products.

“At the same time, we offer unique features that set our product apart such as a valuation module powered by Kelley Blue Book, the ability for dealers to access insights on inventory regardless of which export destination it is listed on and, access to an inventory analysis tool that provides a market comparison across the dealer group as well as per individual rooftop locations.

“We have paid extra attention to the way we display the information relying on images and graphs in multiple colours to allow users to navigate easily through the platform, which is accessed via our existing dashboard,” Allen says.

Michael Sommerton, Cox Automotive Australia Retail Solutions CEO, highlighted the importance of AutoRadar and what it means for the Australian automotive industry.

“Finally, there is a new player in town. With our new market insights product, dealers can access used-car data pulled from multiple sources allowing dealer principals to have access to solid market intelligence to optimise their pricing strategy,” Sommerton says.

“We are leveraging years of experience in automotive data management and distribution, and now that Kelley Blue Book is part of our suite of products, we are also able to integrate vehicle valuations seamlessly with AutoRadar.

“This, and our unbiased approach to the market, means that we are in a unique position to offer a competitive product in terms of features and price that will entice dealers to use AutoRadar to back up their pricing decisions with intelligent data,” Sommerton says.

AutoRadar is available now and is offering a free 30-day trial to all users. Dealer Solutions customers can be set up in minutes, and those dealers that do not use Dealer Solutions for their data distribution services may also take part of the 30-day trial and access AutoRadar’s full set of features.
A refurbished Hemi Orange 1971 four-speed manual Chrysler VH Charger R/T coupe sold for $99,000 in Shannon’s timed online auction that closed on June 3.

The Charger is believed to have been the third R/T coupe built and possibly the earliest surviving example in Australia, according to the auction house.

Shannon says 98 of the 101 lots were sold and buyers paid good prices for classic vehicles and heritage numerical number plates from NSW and Victoria.

It says a last-minute duel between two enthusiasts for a 1977 Porsche 911 Turbo 3.0 coupe saw $164,500 paid for the vehicle.

A factory right-hand drive 1960 Mercedes-Benz 190SL Roadster that had been restored some years ago garnered $161,500.

Shannon says there were 32 bids for a left-hand-drive 1965 Chevrolet Corvette 327/350HP Convertible which sold for $92,000.

Following the official completion of the auction, the 1957 Porsche 356 A “improved coupe” sold in its $170,000–$190,000 guiding range.

Amongst the 21 black and white heritage number plates on offer, the top seller was the New South Wales triple digit plate “280”, which attracted the auction’s top 80 bids before selling for $220,000. The Victorian triple-digit plate “474” received 58 bids before selling for $145,500.

The top-selling four-digit Heritage plate was NSW “2,360” at $92,000, while the top Victorian four-digit plate was ‘1.717’ for $83,000 and the best five-digit result was the VIC plate ’77.888’ at $71,500.

Restored former working vehicles produced some of the outstanding results of the online auction, with a 1949 Ford V8 ‘Single Spinner’ Ute attracting 38 bids before bringing $45,000; a restored 1960 Holden FB Ute sold for $43,000 after 20 bids and a 1970 Holden HG Belmont Panel Van offered with no reserve sold for $23,000 after 39 bids.

“Project” vehicles were also very popular with online bidders, with a 1955 MG TF 1500 selling for $40,500 after 2 bids, while a rare 1958 MGA 1500 Fixed Head Coupe similarly offered with no reserve brought $27,500.

Meanwhile, a very attractive 1936 SS 1½ Litre Saloon that came to auction requiring interior completion, sold with no reserve for $18,500; a 1948 Jaguar MKIV 1½ Litre Saloon with a Jaguar Heritage Certificate that could be further improved brought $25,000 and a 1950 Jaguar MKV ‘Modified’ Saloon professionally re-powered with a rebuilt Holden 3.3 litre in-line six-cylinder engine and matching four-speed manual transmission, sold for $20,500.

At the other end of the Jaguar price scale, a Special Equipment XK120 Roadster sold above its pre-auction estimate for $151,000, while an Australian-delivered 1956 XK140 Fixed Head Coupe went for $125,000.

Other classics included a left-hand drive 1972 Plymouth Barracuda Coupe that sold for $53,351 after a bidding duel, while a restored 1970 Mini K1100 sold for $29,000 after a flurry of late bidding.

The six classic motorcycles in the auction were in high demand, with a 1969 Velocette 500cc Sportsman selling for an outstanding $39,500, while a 1960 Harley-Davidson FL Duo Glide attracted 50 bids before selling for $38,500.

The auction team is now preparing and sourcing entries for another Shannon Timed Online Auction, which will be running for a week this time from Wednesday, August 19–26.
BMW EXPANDS ACCREDITED REPAIRER PROGRAMME

BMW Australia is rapidly expanding its accredited national vehicle repair programme.

It will enable the repair of BMWs to a structural integrity and quality that matches or exceeds the levels of the factories where the vehicles were manufactured.

A new globally-certified training programme provides accredited body shops the ability to repair carbon-fibre and the structural elements involved in electric vehicles.

THE NEW MULTI-STEP TRAINING PROGRAMME COVERS THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS:

- Carbon-fibre repair
- Insurance assessor training
- Structural repair
- Panel replacement
- Electric vehicle overview
- Model technology updates
- Painter training
- Glass replacement

The training programme allies with a bolstered technical infrastructure for national BMW body shops that provide greater coverage for BMW customers.

BMW paint and panel repair professionals are trained in the global programme work with cutting-edge techniques.

These include aviation-standard methodologies to ensure the vehicle performs to its highest standard and also carries a superior finish following an accident or repair work.

BMW body shops have model-specific computerised body alignment benches to check alignment of body points, the Kinematic Diagnostic System (KDS) to return suspension geometry to OEM tolerances and the Diagnostic Information System (DIS), which can determine the extent of vehicle damage before work commences.

The company provides a training career pathway for specialists to ensure they receive updated modules and training information in light of BMW’s new and refreshed product portfolio.

“Our aim is not to repair BMW vehicles to OEM standards, but actually repair to a much higher level so they can capably withstand another impact, ensuring superior cabin integrity for all occupants.”

The training programme is also designed to future proof the work of local professionals in providing them knowledge and education of new generation automotive design, engineering and construction techniques and how to deal with the intricacies of repairing highly complex vehicles.

“As we transition into more mainstream adoption of electric vehicles and autonomous technologies, we are seeing an increased requirement for chassis and bodies to balance strength, weight, flex and rigidity,” Meierbeck says.

“BMW vehicles now include increased levels of high strength steel, aluminium, aluminium steel composites, carbon, plastics and thermal plastics, and we therefore need to ensure our people are educated and fully informed of every detail.

“This is where such a high quality training programme plays such an important role and, when combined with our technical capability, further differentiates a BMW Bodyshop from a conventional body shop,” he says.

BMW Australia has 45 Accredited BMW body shops across Australia.
Aftermarket | Parts and Accessories

Butt welding equipment manufacturer Worldpoly has selected Narva to supply all lighting in its new Australian-made PolyForce500 models.

Butt welding machines are used in Australia and globally to join lengths of HDPE (high-density polyethylene) pipe, for a variety of construction, gas, mining, water, agricultural and other applications. The PolyForce500 range is capable of joining pipes of up to 500mm diameter and Worldpoly has machines catering for pipe diameters ranging from 40mm to 3600mm. The process involves using the machine’s hydraulic clamps to secure the ends of each pipe while a heating plate is applied to the ends. When the correct temperature is reached the hydraulic clamps butt both ends together under force, holding them in position while the bonding process takes place to ensure a high–quality seal.

Most butt–welding machines operate in remote and demanding locations from early morning to late at night, which is why Worldpoly specified the Narva equipment on its latest models.

Two Narva Explora 14-inch single row LED light bars, four Model 8 LED white marker lamps, a Hi Optics LED rotating beacon and a HDRV Surface mount dual USB socket are part of the machine’s standard equipment. Worldpoly managing director Rob Hall says the company used Narva products on several other models and that the equipment had stood up well to the tough life in the field.

“Our customers are making a large investment when purchasing a PolyForce500 unit and we can’t afford to be let down by any component of the machine, including lighting,” Hall says.

The Explora light bars, which feature 12 x 5W high power LEDs (5700°K) producing 1 LUX at 275m, are installed at each end of the machine. The bars are rated to IP68 and IP69K for dust and water ingress.

The first PolyForce500 machines are already working with customers in Northern Queensland with several others now in the manufacturing cycle.
INITIATIVE MELBOURNE TAKES OVER GPC MEDIA PLANNING AND BUYING

Genuine Parts Company (GPC) ANZ, has appointed Initiative Melbourne to manage its media planning and buying portfolio.

The handover became effective in June covering both the Australian and New Zealand markets.

GPC ANZ manages a portfolio of automotive aftermarket retail and trade brands, including but not limited to, Repco, NAPA and Sparesbox.

Its pursuit to find a new media agency comes soon after launching revised brand propositions and an internal business transformation. The appointment will assist GPC enhance its future marketing campaigns and activations.

GPC ANZ says it has undergone significant transformation which has seen it drive business efficiency, productivity and true agency partnering. So, it seemed timely that

seeking a new media agency was part of those plans.

“Finding the right media partner for our business is key to our continued success,” GPC general manager marketing ANZ Diana Di Cecco says.

“It is quite a cluttered media market out there so it’s important that our future agency met our business needs and were a perfect fit from a values perspective. We’re delighted to appoint Initiative Melbourne as our media partner and excited about how they will deliver in the key areas.”

GPC ANZ has been evaluating each of its agencies and found media services were being significantly underserviced.

“Agencies should be an extension of the marketing team and not simply book ad spots. There’s more to it than that. We want to more effectively communicate with existing customers, engage prospective customers and build customer-based brand equity. That’s what marketers do. We can’t do it alone. We need exceptional partners,” Di Cecco says.

“The pitch process was intense. It showed us who Initiative really are and provided a lens into their approach to media and business. They showcased high levels of professionalism and superior strategic thinking, balanced with tactical and integrated communications.

“It was easy to see they were passionate and performed well under pressure. Most importantly, there was genuine chemistry between our teams from the very first meeting. The sum of this made the decision obvious,” Di Cecco says.

“Generations of Australian motor enthusiasts have grown up on GPC’s brands, like Repco, as the go-to source for automotive supplies. We are thrilled to be selected to help them accelerate their customer connectivity.

“Like most organisations, GPC is adjusting to new parameters of customer relationships across their brand portfolio and we are focused on helping lead the way,” Initiative Melbourne managing director Sarah James says.

OPTIBELT BELT TENSION TESTER REDUCES DOWN TIME

Optibelt says its TT line frequency tension tester provides an accurate and fast test of drive belt tension by measuring the frequency of vibration, resulting in extended belt and pulley life and a reduction in down time.

The compact design of the TT line tester offers universal application possibilities. It is designed for even the most difficult to reach places making it ideal for checking the tensions of V-belts, ribbed belts, kraftbands and timing belts.

After switching it on, the appliance is ready to transfer data immediately with the measuring head held over the belt. Two red LED lights in the measuring head combine into one at a distance of 40–65mm to position it accurately over the belt. The tensioned belt is then made to vibrate by plucking it by fingers or striking it with an object.

The tension tester immediately starts taking readings showing the results in hertz (Hz) regardless of the condition or colour of the belt. Tension recommendations can be taken from Optibelt specifications CAP drive design calculations or the Optibelt App.

It is interference free with measuring methods EM: electromagnetic waves and AC: acceleration integrated. If there is too much movement when testing the red lights will turn off and the display will show “Rapid Move” until the tester is steady at which point the display will show ‘Ready’.

The TT tension tester can also be used on long centre distances due to a wide high frequency range of AC: 1–16Hz and EM: 6–600Hz. The tester can be used on 300 belt measurements before the battery requires recharging and is not affected by UV light.

For those hard to reach belt spans, the measuring head has a flexible goose neck and a 250mm cable AC. The unit has a large easy to read back lit display screen of 43mm wide and 53mm high, a USB port for recharging and an automatic switch-off.

The Optibelt TT comes in a kit containing the tension tester, measuring head, charger, USB cable and a clipper for holding the measuring head and is available from automotive, transport and industrial wholesalers.
“Hammer 10 nails into this board and, when you are finished, I’ll give you another task.” A fine example for the classic employer and employee roles. This is not meant quite seriously, but in essence hits the nail on the head.

Personally, I prefer the co-entrepreneur. We have almost 1000 of this type of employee here at Liqui Moly. For more than a quarter of a century, I have been cultivating our co-operation within the company on the basis of this corporate philosophy. Still, not everyone understands that working as co-entrepreneurs yields a thousand times more benefit than just being a co-worker or employee.

The word co-entrepreneur is put in quotation marks by some people, and I often have to explain that this is not a case of false advertising, but a true description of our way of working as a team for the benefit of the company – and thus for the benefit of everyone.

Being co-entrepreneurs means we undertake things together. Now that’s really cool. Because it is not necessary to tell entrepreneurs which hammer to use to knock which nail into which board.

They already know that themselves. Saving costs, increasing turnover, generating profits – the supreme disciplines of entrepreneurship are performed by co-entrepreneurs a thousand times more independently, reliably and with greater commitment than by mere recipients of orders.

We are good to the company and the company is good to us. A simple description of mutual care to the advantage of all in this community.

My Liqui Moly/Meguin family worldwide is also often set in quotation marks. But please tell me: What form of living together brings more stability, care and helpfulness for the individual members than the family?

Of course, there is sometimes also discord in a family, but family members stick together and help and support each other. This part of our corporate architecture is also based on our company philosophy of humanity. No one is forced to believe anything and no one is left in the lurch.

No one is just a number and there are no sacrificial victims of rationalisation with the aim of increasing profits. And it is precisely because we are 1000 co-entrepreneurs and have united all our customers, business associates and partners in the large worldwide Liqui Moly/Meguin family that we achieve outstanding economic successes year after year. Neither selfishness, nor egoism, nor rivalry determine our actions, but co-operation, friendship and service to the common good.

To borrow from Robert Bosch, who said: “I don’t pay good wages because I have a lot of money; I have a lot of money because I pay good wages.”

The monetary aspect still counts as much as the appreciation, respect, cultivated cooperation and goal-oriented work of all those who all have a common goal, namely that the company is doing well, so that jobs are secure and work is fun.
**CLOSING THE ADVERTISING LOOP WITH TV AND RADIO**

From our regular discussions with dealers, it has become clear that today’s push toward digital marketing has led many to mistakenly believe that advertising on traditional mediums such as radio and television, is a thing of the past.

It is true that online advertising is superior in the way it enables a more refined form of customer targeting that can pinpoint the right message to the right customer at the right time.

However, the old faithfuls of TV and radio still have their place in the marketing mix, as they play an integral part in developing awareness of a brand in a broad audience.

The key to remember with these forms of more traditional ad-types in the modern era is that they deliver a far higher return on investment if your digital campaigns are in place to support them, and there is consistency in your messaging across all mediums.

Despite music streaming services and the increasing popularity of podcasts, 89 per cent of people still listen to the radio in their car according to a survey by Backstage. It is an engaging and well-loved medium for consumers, with many holding loyalties to certain stations and shows.

A Colmar Brunton study found that people are six times more likely to visit a business website if they have heard them advertise on the radio. They also found that a combination of radio and online advertising delivers an average return on investment three times greater than combining TV and digital.

This tells us that establishing a multi-faceted media plan that includes both radio and digital is key to successful and cost-effective advertising.

Radio advertising can be targeted at a basic level, in that media agencies will choose stations, shows and timeslots based on the known demographics of listeners, when selecting where to place your ad.

Complete listener recall following a radio advertisement, however, is rarely reliable. They may hear the features and benefits messaging and call to action in an ad but forget or mishear the name of your dealership.

It is at this point that the majority of customers will engage Google, so having your digital advertising in place – namely your search engine optimisation (SEO) and search engine marketing (SEM) – is vital. Without it, you may find that your radio ad has driven your customer to your competitor’s website.

Similar to radio advertising, television is a medium that reaches the masses to build awareness. The key difference, however, is that we now live in a time of double-screening, where many people are simultaneously on their phone while watching TV.

**What this enables is for people to take immediate action upon seeing an advertisement that sparks their interest.**

Again, emphasis needs to be placed on ensuring that SEO and SEM are established to ensure that anyone who runs a search during or following a television advertisement is captured and directed to your website. Without these mechanisms in place, you may lose the customer’s interest or worse, they may land on the website of another dealership.

With both television and radio advertising, consistent and clear messaging and creative are key, and these must flow through to your website. If someone sees or hears your promotion, it is important that they receive the same messages when they run a search.

Then, when they reach your website, they must also be presented with related creative that delivers the same messages as your television or radio advert to prevent them becoming lost or confused and falling away.

Such artwork can be in the form of a homepage banner or a landing page dedicated to your offer.

The other important aspect of an effective, multi-channel campaign is the implementation of retargeting.

Awareness advertising through the combination of radio, tv and digital will drive traffic to your website, so it is important to also have a follow-up campaign that targets these new visitors on social and digital platforms, reiterating your earlier messaging while introducing some form of retail offer.

The aim of an effective advertising campaign is to close the loop, ensuring you are capturing the customer at every possible stage of their purchasing journey – never missing an opportunity to engage them. This can be done using multi-faceted campaigns combining both traditional and digital advertising mediums that drive customers to your website.

Such campaigns build awareness of your dealership or offer and push a prospective customer down the purchasing funnel to a point where they are considering engaging with you – one step closer to that all-important vehicle purchase.
Volkswagen Group Australia’s (VGA) body builder programme, is now offering extended Amarok XL and XXL models with more tray capacity.

The new factory-endorsed range is on sale now, offering customers a purpose-built turn-key solution to order.

Adelaide-based Adaptive Manufacturing are building the XL and XXL Amaroks under licence from Veth Automotive in the Netherlands who created the original factory-approved conversions.

Volkswagen recognised that while the Amarok tray can accommodate a Euro pallet between the wheel arches, some Australian customers need even more tray capacity to get the job done.

VGA national conversion manager Andrew Hester says the body builder programme, is available to customers across Volkswagen’s national dealer network.

“The Amarok XL and XXL top-to-tail solutions are very much the tip of the iceberg. Volkswagen and its partners can engineer literally dozens of bespoke variants,” Hester says.

All Amarok XL/XXL variants come with electronic stability control reprogramming designed to compensate for the longer wheelbase. In addition are three, centre of gravity height programmes to compensate for additional conversions.

VGA says the Amarok XL and XXL conversions retain the full five-year unlimited km manufacturer’s warranty.

AMAROK XL AND XXL KEY FEATURES:

- BUILT ON AMAROK (GP) FOUR-CYLINDER OR V6, DUAL CAB 4MOTION MT & AT MODELS.
- XL WITH +310MM LONGER WHEELBASE OR XXL WITH +650MM LONGER WHEELBASE.
- VOLKSWAGEN ADAPTED ESC PROGRAMME.
- CHASSIS OR UTILITY MODELS.
- ESC REPROGRAMMING TO COMPENSATE FOR THE LONGER WHEELBASE(S).
- 4MOTION PERMANENT 4X4.
- REAR DIFF LOCK AS STANDARD.
- CONVERTER’S OWN RANGE OF OPTIONS & ACCESSORIES AVAILABLE.

AMAROK STRETCHES TO MEET NICHE MARKETS

CONVERSION PRICING (ABOVE COST OF BASE AMAROK VEHICLE):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONVERSION TYPE</th>
<th>RRP INC GST</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Amarok XL Dual Cab Chassis</td>
<td>$10,595</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amarok XL Dual Cab Utility</td>
<td>$18,995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amarok XXL Dual Cab Chassis</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amarok XXL Dual Cab Utility</td>
<td>$21,995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONVERSION TYPE

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Lexus recently held the global unveiling of the all-new IS sports sedan which is the top-selling model in the Australian market.

In 2019 the IS model accounted for 818 Australian sales complemented by a 183% year-on-year increase in ES sales to 561 units.

The IS remains the brand’s highest-selling nameplate in Australia, with a cumulative 46,187 sales (to May 2020) since the cars launch in 1999.

Globally, the IS sales tally stands at 1.09 million. The new IS will arrive in Australian dealerships in late 2020.

Lexus Australia chief executive Scott Thompson says the new IS represents a key opportunity in the Australian market.

“Australian customer preferences align perfectly with the focus on design, performance and technology with the new IS, making it an important addition to Lexus dealerships later this year,” Thompson says.

“Combined with Lexus values of customer care and the experiences delivered by the renowned Encore program, loyal and new customers will be delighted by both the new IS and the Lexus luxury lifestyle.

“The IS also joins the ES to reinforce the Lexus commitment to the passenger vehicle segment, providing customers the luxury of choice with sedans that deliver diverse appeal,” he says.

Lexus says the handling of the new IS was honed at the company’s new technical centre in Shimoyama, Japan. It will debut new technology including Lane Tracing Assist1, and new Driver Emergency Stop Assist1 and Emergency Steering Assist1.

Lexus says a focus on technology continues in the hybrid IS 300h with improved throttle response delivering more immediate acceleration from the 2.5-litre normally aspirated four-cylinder engine and electric motor pairing.

It says for customers seeking a balance of performance and efficiency, the 2-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine in the IS 300 now features enhanced adaptive control for the eight-speed automatic transmission.

An eight-speed automatic transmission also continues to be available in the 3.5-litre normally aspirated V6-powered IS 350.

Inside the new IS a 10.3-inch display screen features newly forward-mounted positioning, touch-display functionality and Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility.

The high-resolution display complements the renewed ambience of the IS cabin, which features key firsts. This includes a new form of Lexus decorative expression for part of the door trim, which features a graphic pattern of embossed intersecting lines, new accents in surface treatments and decorative ornamentation finished for the first time in Ash – open-pore black, Black Geometric Film, or F Sport-exclusive Satin Chrome.

Available chromatic colours are used on the upper instrument panel and new two-tone colour schemes – Ochre and F Sport-exclusive Flare Red – are available.

Lexus chief designer Kenichi Hirai say the aim for the new IS was to achieve an aggressive design that evokes a sense of driving.

“To achieve a high degree of design, Lexus members in product planning, production technology, engineering, and styling combined their various insights and united behind development from an early stage,” Hirai says.

“This enabled us to achieve the proportions of a four-door coupe that has a low centre of gravity, an explicit form, and other elements that express the worldview of the new IS,” he said.

“We also pursued a deep and rich interior by paying close attention to detail, such as in the use of colour in design and as in ornamentation. I think the styling makes it possible to feel the maturation of the fun of driving,” Hirai says.
More than 110,234 new vehicles were sold in June 2020, according to the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI), a 6.4% decrease on previous corresponding period.

However, FCAI says it is the strongest result since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis which saw March sales down 17.9%, April sales down 48.5% and May sales down 35.3%.

FCAI chief executive Tony Weber says the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, seasonality, the extension of the Federal Government's instant asset write-off scheme, and brand and dealer pro-activity contributed to the markets recovery.

"Some states have seen the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, and this has increased floor traffic through dealerships," Weber says.

"June is traditionally a very strong month for new vehicle sales. The End of Financial Year campaigns are well known, so it’s an excellent time for businesses and consumers to replace their vehicles.

"In June 2020, this has been reflected in strong results for business purchases, which have increased by 6.3 per cent on June 2019.

"The extension of the Government’s instant asset write-off scheme has also been a positive influence. This program allows businesses to bring forward tax deductions for eligible expenditure.

"Finally, we have seen a strong surge in marketing activity from both brands and dealerships, which are offering an array of attractive retail packages in a bid to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"With all of this activity favouring consumers, there’s no doubt that there has never been a better time to negotiate the purchase of a new vehicle," Weber says.

Toyota was the best-selling brand in June, with 22,867 sales recorded. In second place was Mazda with 9420 sales, followed by Hyundai with 7737, Ford with 7624 sales and Mitsubishi with 7419.

Four of the five top selling vehicles in June were 4x4 vehicles, reflecting the unique nature of the Australian market. The top-selling vehicle was the Toyota Hi-Lux with 6537 sales (up 21.1 per cent on June 2019), followed by the Ford Ranger with 5329 (up 9.9 per cent), the Toyota Corolla with 3008 (down 4.1 per cent), the Toyota Landcruiser with 2909 (up 23.3 per cent) and the Mitsubishi Triton with 2721 (up 1.0 per cent).

Despite these “green shoots,” June represents the 27th consecutive month of decreasing sales for the automotive industry, a fact which, over time, has been attributed to a number of environmental, political, financial and health issues within the Australian market.

Weber adds that associated Government initiatives had likely supported the slight recovery.

"Stimulus packages from the Federal Government, such as Job Keeper and Job Seeker, have helped to restore some consumer confidence and supported the small bounce back during June.

“However, there’s no doubt that the new vehicle industry in Australia is still under high pressure. We’re not out of the woods yet," Weber says.

CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE...
### SUV MEDIUM UNDER 60k

1. **Toyota RAV4**
   - Price: 2632

2. **Mazda CX-5**
   - Price: 2530

3. **Hyundai Tucson**
   - Price: 2206

4. **Subaru Forester**
   - Price: 1464

5. **Nissan X-Trail**
   - Price: 1387

6. **Honda CR-V**
   - Price: 1381

7. **Mitsubishi Outlander**
   - Price: 1306

8. **Kia Sportage**
   - Price: 1213

9. **Volkswagen Tiguan**
   - Price: 883

10. **MG HS**
    - Price: 323

### PU/CC 4X4

1. **Ford Ranger 4X4**
   - Price: 5092

2. **Toyota Hilux 4X4**
   - Price: 4811

3. **Mitsubishi Triton 4X4**
   - Price: 2292

4. **Toyota Landcruiser PU/CC**
   - Price: 1388

5. **Mazda BT-50 4X4**
   - Price: 1315

6. **Nissan Navara 4X4**
   - Price: 1234

7. **Volkswagen Amarok 4X4**
   - Price: 1229

8. **Isuzu Ute D-Max 4X4**
   - Price: 1137

9. **Holden Colorado 4X4**
    - Price: 759

10. **LDV T60 4X4**
    - Price: 618

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**TOP 10 BRANDS**

- **KIA**
  - Price: 26,458

- **VOLKSWAGEN**
  - Price: 19,595

- **NISSAN**
  - Price: 18,693

- **HONDA**
  - Price: 16,529

- **SUBARU**
  - Price: 14,957

...CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE
EVs and hybrid vehicle sales remain strong in Australia.

EVs and hybrids continued strong growth in June, while internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle sales were down in nearly all categories.

June is the 27th consecutive month of decreasing sales for the automotive industry, attributed to a number of environmental, political, financial and health issues within the Australian market, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) says.

While 110,234 vehicles sold during the month, FCAI chief executive Tony Weber says although this represents a decrease of 6.4% over June 2019, it is the strongest result since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis.

He still doesn’t mention the upswing in electrics, plug-in hybrids (PHEVs) and other hybrids, however.

But the figures speak for themselves. Electrics and PHEVs in the private passenger sector, for instance, recorded 58 sales in June compared with 19 for the same month in 2019 – a 205.3% rise.

Year-to-date sales are 270 compared with 165 for the same period last year, up 63.6%.

Hybrids in the same sector see 1007 sales in June 2020 as opposed to 538 in June 2019, an 87.2% increase.

The 4906 hybrid sales YTD are up 40.3% on the 3497 sold during the same period last year.

The non-private passenger sector shows a similar result. Electric/PHEVs had 78 sales in June 2020 in the category, up 90.2% on the previous June’s 41 sales.

YTD sales went from 154 last year to 322 this year – a 109.1% rise.

Hybrids fared well too in the non-private passenger market, going from 891 in June 2019 to 1330 in June just gone – a 49.3% increase.

YTD figures are 6930, a 17% rise on the 5922 sales recorded last year for the same sector.

SUVs are a popular market, electrics/PHEVs and hybrids continuing the trend.

Private SUVs saw electric/PHEVs rise from 92 in June 2019 to 133 (up 44.6%) for the month past and from 352 this time last year up to 514 YTD – a 46% rise.

Hybrids did even better in the private SUV category, climbing from 626 in June 2019 to 1021 for the same month this year – up 63.1%. And for YTD sales they jumped a massive 286.5% from 1736 to 6710.

The rises are just as marked in the non-private SUV sector.

Here, electrics/PHEVs went up 134.7% in monthly comparisons (from 49 in June 2019 to 115 in June 2020) but dropped 32.4% in YTD comparisons from 602 to 407.

Hybrids, on the other hand, went from 325 in June 2019 to 885 in June just gone – up 172.3% in the same category.

And the YTD rise in this sector was even better, up 277.8% from 1241 to 4689.

All-in—all the latest figures show the growing popularity of low to zero emission vehicles among Australian vehicle buyers.

And that’s without much support for EVs and hybrids from the federal government.

| NEW VEHICLE SALES BY BUYER TYPE AND FUEL TYPE JUNE 2020 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|                         | Month                  | YTD                     | Variance +/ Vol. & %    |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Total Market            | MTH 2019               | 2020                    | 2019                    | MTH                     | YTD                     | MTH                     | YTD                     |
| Electric                |                        |                         |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Passenger Private       | 58                     | 19                      | 270                     | 165                     | 39                      | 105                     | 205.3%                  | 63.6%                  |
| Passenger Non-Private   | 78                     | 41                      | 322                     | 154                     | 37                      | 168                     | 90.2%                   | 109.1%                 |
| SDV Private             | 133                    | 92                      | 514                     | 352                     | 41                      | 162                     | 44.6%                   | 46.0%                  |
| SDV Non-Private         | 115                    | 49                      | 407                     | 602                     | 66                      | -195                    | 194.7%                  | -32.4%                 |
| Light Commercial        | 0                      | 2                       | 13                      | 7                       | -2                      | 6                       | -100.0%                 | 85.7%                  |
| Non-Private             |                        |                         |                         |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Sub Total               | 384                    | 203                     | 1,526                   | 1,280                   | 181                     | 256                     | 89.2%                   | 19.2%                  |
| Hybrid                  |                        |                         |                         |                         |                         |                         |
| Passenger Private       | 1,007                  | 538                     | 4,906                   | 3,497                   | 469                     | 1,409                   | 87.2%                   | 40.3%                  |
| Passenger Non-Private   | 1,330                  | 891                     | 6,930                   | 5,922                   | 439                     | 1,008                   | 49.3%                   | 17.0%                  |
| SDV Private             | 1,021                  | 626                     | 6,710                   | 1,736                   | 395                     | 4,914                   | 63.1%                   | 286.5%                 |
| SDV Non-Private         | 885                    | 325                     | 4,689                   | 1,281                   | 560                     | 3,848                   | 172.3%                  | 277.8%                 |
| Sub Total               | 4,243                  | 2,380                   | 23,325                  | 12,996                  | 1,863                   | 10,839                  | 78.3%                   | 87.4%                  |
| Total                   | 4,627                  | 2,583                   | 24,761                  | 15,676                  | 2,044                   | 11,085                  | 79.1%                   | 81.1%                  |
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MONTH

AUGUST LAUNCH FOR REVAMPS TOYOTA HILUX

Toyota Motor Corporation has unveiled a revamped Hilux ute to global markets, which the manufacturer says is significantly improved and updated.

It will launch in Australian dealerships from late August, the local distributor says.

Toyota says the tougher looking Hilux has improved performance, fuel economy, ride comfort, towing and equipment levels.

LIMITED EDITION SKODA SCOUT ARRIVES AS AN INTERIM OFFER

Skoda Australia is launching a limited production run of the Superb Scout on to the market for sale.

The brand has obtained several hundred Scouts for sale in the interim as the revised Superb sedan and wagon ranges are not due to land until later this year.

The Superb Scout comes as a single specification model priced at $59,490; comparable in value to the Superb Sportline that has comprised almost half of current generation Superb sales.

FORD WILL BUILD NEW 2022 VOLKSWAGEN AMAROK

The next-generation Volkswagen Amarok due in 2022 will be engineered and built by the Ford Motor Company.

The new Ranger platform-derived Amarok is one of three new commercial vehicles to be developed under the global alliance formed by the Ford Motor Company and Volkswagen AG in July 2019.

As well as Ford developing the 2022 Amarok, Volkswagen will develop a city delivery van based on the latest Caddy model as early as 2021. Ford will later develop a one-tonne cargo van.

MOTORCLASSICA EVENT POSTPONED UNTIL OCTOBER 2021

The organiser behind Motordassica says it has made the difficult decision not to hold the event this year, but postpone until October 22-24, 2021.

In an email statement, Motorclassica organisers Exhibitions and Trade Fairs Pty Ltd says its priority is to create a world-class experience in a safe environment.

“There are many uncertainties still in place that impact our ability to deliver the experience that you have come to expect and deserve from Motorclassica,” the organiser says.
GM HOLDEN PUTS LANG LANG PROVING GROUND UP FOR SALE

A leaked online real estate sales brochure says the GM-Holden proving ground at Lang Lang will be vacant for possession from the third quarter of 2020.

The Herald Sun has reported that commercial real estate company CBRE has listed the Lang Lang facility, which is found off the Bass Highway between Melbourne and Phillip Island.

It says listing agents CBRE executive managing director Dean Hunt and colleague Stephen Agdemis refused to comment on the matter.

NEW GENERATION KODO DESIGN MAZDA BT-50 REVEALED

Mazda Australia has revealed the new Kodo-design Mazda BT-50, announcing it will go on sale in Australia towards the end of 2020.

The Australian distributor says the Mazda BT-50 offers a comprehensive list of advanced features, bold styling and rugged capability, all designed to the highest safety standards.

Mazda Australia managing director Vinesh Bhindi says the brand-new BT-50 will set a new benchmark in the segment.

“The new Mazda BT-50 will raise the bar for what customers can expect from their ute,” Bhindi says.

RANGE ROVER FIFTY RESTRICTED TO 37 AUSSIE BUYERS

To celebrate its 50th year in production, only 1970 units of the limited edition Range Rover Fifty will be produced for global consumption.

The allocation for Australian customers has been restricted to 37 units and just four colours are available to choose from.

Australian-bound Range Rover Fifty models will offer the standard wheelbase and will have the 386kW 5-litre supercharged V8 engine.

ANCAP LAUNCHES RESCUE APP

Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack joined ANCAP at the app’s national launch in Canberra.

“All Australian road users will benefit from this app, which is the first to bring together important vehicle safety information for emergency service personnel,” McCormack says.

“If you’re involved in a crash, the information contained within the ANCAP Rescue app will allow emergency service officers to safely and more efficiently get to you and provide the help that is needed,” he says.

The ANCAP Rescue app is compiled of ‘rescue sheets’ for more than 500 new and used vehicle models available across Australia and New Zealand.