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Trader numbers hit by tough conditions

Dealers say decline may 'clean up' industry but threats to viability of remaining businesses lingering on



The number of registered traders is at its lowest since June 2012

The number of registered motor-vehicle dealers has fallen to a 13-year low amid trading conditions many in the sector describe as among the toughest the market has experienced.

One of the main challenges for businesses is the clean car standard (CCS) with concerns "the whole car industry in New Zealand is going to be in trouble" unless the government makes major changes to the scheme.

At the end of September, there were 2,591 registered dealers on

the motor vehicle traders register (MVTR), which was the lowest since June 2012 when the total came in at 2,605.

Dealer numbers have been in general decline since peaking at 3,535 in November 2017 and they haven't topped 3,000 in the past three years. The rate of attrition has accelerated recently with September's tally down by more than 280 from the 2,880 traders registered at the end of the same month in 2024.

Chris Stephenson, chief executive of the Enterprise Motor

Group, says those dropping off the list are likely to be a mix of dealers with yards and those who have registered but only sell a few vehicles each year.

"If you drive around it does seem like there are fewer yards," he told Autofile. "There were smaller, new starters who probably popped up when things were really buoyant, but they haven't survived their first downturn, or maybe they have decided it has got too hard and have moved on to do something else.

"The market is down and I guess

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Driving forward after successful first year

Adele Rose highlights industry leadership and collaboration as scheme's biggest takeaways

In excess of four million tyres have been collected for recycling and around 5,000 industry members have registered since Tyrewise became operational.

The success of the scheme's first year has been incredible and extremely rewarding.

That's especially the case for those in the supply chain whose vision of more than a decade ago, of their industry taking responsibility for its own waste, has come to life.

The biggest takeaway has been the importance of collaboration, industry leadership and the ability of a collective to achieve far more by working together than in silos.

The tyre industry is widespread and diverse with importers covering a huge range of product types and sellers, large franchise operations in major cities and small family businesses in isolated, rural communities.

Getting everyone on the waka has been vital, and our team is kept extremely busy with phone calls, emails, webinars, roadshows and one-on-one visits by our reps.

The result is a scheme which has surpassed its initial targets for end-of-life tyres (ELTs) collected before being processed into tyre-derived materials.

Our target is to recycle and repurpose 80 per cent of New Zealand's ELTs onshore after our fourth year of operation. That means our next big challenge is to nurture our fledgling market for recycled rubber materials.

The scheme has since launched



ADELE ROSE
Chief executive of the 3R Group

a contestable fund to develop end markets here and there's a strong interest in developing tyre-derived products.

Tyrewise isn't only the country's first example of a regulated product stewardship scheme, it's

also an excellent example of how success in this space is so reliant on participation.

Industry representatives have been on-board since the start – well over a decade ago – and have been central to the design of the scheme. When it comes to product stewardship success, design is crucial.

The implementation of the project was a big piece of mahi with our team putting in a huge effort to get industry members registered.

What we learned was that even with such a large and widely spread industry, getting everyone – from importers to retailers, transporters and processors – actively participating is possible.

As Mark Gilbert, chair of Auto Stewardship New Zealand, which governs the Tyrewise scheme, puts it: "Those registered partners, the importers, retailers, tyre-fitters, transporters, processors, manufacturers and public-collection sites make up the scheme.

"Without them doing the mahi, what we have achieved so far wouldn't have been possible."

Looking forward, our focus is on enabling the development of end markets in this country, such as tyres in roading. This isn't only an excellent end use but contributes to roading longevity. ☺

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the sad side of it is that it's not great for our economy when a whole lot of entrepreneurs and small business owners shut their doors.

"However, there are still cars being sold and a little less competition perhaps makes it easier for those who are still here to survive, so that's a positive."

The recent decline in dealer numbers has coincided with weakening sales, particularly for used imports.

Nearly 115,000 used cars were sold in 2023, the total slipped to about 98,000 in 2024 and this year's tally is on-track to be below 90,000 units. As for the new sector, it registered about 110,000 light vehicles in 2023, just over 87,000 units the following year and looks set to finish 2025 with about 90,000.

Stephenson believes investment, understanding consumer needs, building customer relations and long-term marketing goals are some of the keys to keeping businesses going when times get tough.



He notes any dealers who wait until a market downturn before thinking hard about their operations are also likely to face problems.

"Cashflow is always a big thing for a lot of people so having some prudence around how you're spending money and what you are doing with it at the best of times is going to help you survive the bad times," he explains.

"It's hard if you're only trying to address any issues your business might be having right at the downturn. You need that prudence when things are going well to set yourself up for the future.

"Recessions also happen more often than we probably remember and you've just got to stay focused to get through moments like this.

"Eventually we come out of it, eventually the economy turns and it's back to the good old days again until the next time."

He adds the current state of the market potentially supports established businesses such as the Enterprise Motor Group, which

is nearly 60 years old, because consumers thinking about going back to dealers they bought a car from a year ago may find they're no longer trading.

"One of the things we push about our business is that most of our sites have been there 25 or 30 years, so it's really easy to find us if you have bought a car from us before."

Stephenson points out the weaker sales environment comes on top of the industry being hit by a "double whammy" of shifting government regulations, which makes it tougher to do business.

Staff at Enterprise have noticed less discretionary spending at present, while sales at its branches in Auckland, Hamilton and Gisborne are based more on people's needs rather than wants.

"We've also had next to no immigration for a while," he adds. "That propped us up last year quite a bit and probably the year before when immigration was at its peak.

"Most businesses are struggling under that slow economy, and then we've got the impacts of the clean car standard and changing fuel-efficiency regulations.

"Our pool of available cars to import has shrunk and those

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Firms face liquidation

A used-car dealer in south Auckland owes creditors more than \$4.7 million with rising operating costs and competition cited as reasons for its woes.

Mohammed Jan, of Liquidation Management, was appointed to oversee Otahuhu-based Vehicle Direct – and two associated businesses, Auto Trading and Auto Compliance & Repairs – on September 3.

His report states issues have included an inability to recover costs, liabilities from guarantees and the challenging economic conditions.

"External influences, increased competition and rising operating costs further eroded profitability," adds Jan. In addition, there was a lack of sales and insufficient

working capital. Secured creditors include Westpac NZ, which claims it's owed \$3.2m across the three companies.

Vehicle Direct owes Inland Revenue (IR) \$427,564, has staff entitlements of \$232,761 and unsecured creditors totalling \$764,797.

Auto Trading, an import and wholesale business, owes IR \$114,824 and unsecured creditors \$359,455.

In addition to Westpac, Auto Compliance & Repairs has an IR debt of \$285,537 and staff entitlements of \$49,494. Unsecured creditors are owed \$292,140.

The liquidator says all three companies are party to pending legal action. ☹

◀ we can buy are getting slapped with what I would assume are effectively millions of dollars' worth of taxes, which are getting passed onto consumers.

"With the new CCS settings around the lower carbon dioxide [CO2] targets and higher cost for grams of CO2 above set limits, it's a bit of a double whammy.

"If the economy slowly starts to turn, which maybe it feels like it is, we're not going to get ahead because we keep getting rolled over with stricter targets and less credits."

Stephenson believes lots of dealers share similar opinions, and the CCS needs to be looked at by officials and changed "otherwise it's going to cripple the industry next year".

With CO2 targets for light imports set to get progressively tougher at the start of each year, it's only going to get harder for companies until there is better availability of stock and increased sales numbers.

"We've got consumers struggling to pay for cars at the best of times and they are currently getting stretched even further," he adds.

"The CCS in its current form is going to make it harder for them to buy newer cars and it's going to make it harder for us to source at prices people will be able to pay for them.

"The targets mean the pool of available cars we can bring in will get smaller and the cost of them is only going to get higher. It's the opposite of what the industry and probably the economy needs at the moment"

He says the Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association has done a good job of getting the topic of the CCS onto the radar of the government, which in August announced plans to scrap the weight-adjustment system for imported passenger vehicles and light commercials.

The coalition is also consulting on proposals to allow carbon credits to be traded between the used and new sectors, and to extend the lifespan of credits to four years.



Michael Farmer, of Farmer Autovillage



Hayden Johnston, of GVI

STOCK AVAILABILITY

Hayden Johnston, director and general manager of Genuine Vehicle Imports (GVI), agrees the CCS has impacted the viability of some dealerships as the challenges in securing stock from Japan have increased because of the scheme's shifting goals.

He warns that if the coalition fails to amend legislation affecting the automotive industry, then more dealers will face the threat of going out of business.

"If the CCS doesn't change the whole car industry in New Zealand is going to be in trouble," he says.

"These are the worst economic conditions our industry has ever seen locally and for importers there has been a tightening of stock availability out of Japan, which is due to factors such as New Zealand regulations and other market competition.

"We should be better looked after by the government. It should be concerned about the state of our industry."

Johnston adds the supply of vehicles can also be influenced by restrictions on what other markets can buy. "A political shift in another market will change what's available to us, so there's a whole lot of factors that affect our purchasing out of Japan."

GVI has branches in Auckland and Tauranga, and Johnston says the key for dealers surviving the challenging environment is adapting how they do business and source stock.

"It's about looking at your

entire supply chain from purchase through to getting vehicles on the yard," he explains.

"Think how can you do things better. It's not always about doing things cheaper, but looking at every facet of your business and seeing how you can do it better and more efficiently."

The dwindling number of active traders can largely be attributed to

a lot of people who only entered the industry when the market was more buoyant now deciding to drop out, says Johnston.

"We've been through a period where there was a huge influx of people coming in because of zero barriers to becoming a dealer. Now we're seeing those people falling out of bed because things have got harder.

"There have been very low barriers to entry for our industry. We've had an easy source of vehicles, easy funding available and no particular restrictions on who can become a dealer.

"I think most of the people falling out of bed are the people selling cars today but will be selling outdoor furniture tomorrow.

"These are largely not experienced car dealers but are just looking for a way to make an easy buck and will just skip from industry to industry.

"For the good guys, the more that fall over the better. It cleans

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up our industry, and it's a bigger and better market share for those that are left."

POLICY FLIP-FLOPS

The car industry has gone through considerable changes in recent years and is currently not for the faint-hearted, says Michael Farmer, managing director of Farmer Autovillage.

"Over that period of time we've seen a change of governments and policies completely flip-flop," he told Autofile.

"The widespread introduction of electric vehicles is fantastic. However, it needs to be done over a sustainable and profitable timeframe.

"Natural change will occur but we've got to ensure sustainability is still profitable and that's probably been the biggest challenge for the motor-vehicle industry."

Farmer, whose company has branches in the Bay of Plenty and Whitianga on the Coromandel, says dealers need to be able to adapt



to shifting regulations and the drop in the number of registered traders may reflect those who were peripheral in the market.

"A lot of people registered probably weren't really active motor-vehicle traders. The latest numbers may reflect some cleaning out of that, which is logical given the current economy.

"The same is true of real-estate

agents. That industry has a high level of agents in buoyant and strong times. Then it drops down when things button off.

"Generally, people who have been in the automotive industry for a long period of time are going nowhere. At the end of the day, this is just another weather pattern that all dealers who've been here a long time have seen before and will see again."

One of the keys to longevity is ensuring every business resource and function operates as efficiently as possible, says Farmer.

He doesn't expect the market to grow much in terms of overall sales volumes in the immediate future so some rationalisation of

dealer numbers makes sense.

With new manufacturers, particularly Chinese ones, entering the market he notes some franchise dealerships will face the challenge of ensuring their individual brands remain profitable.

"That may require a different level of resources while we go through this period of a significant number of new brands arriving in our country.

"It means the market share of some of individual legacy brands that have been here for longer may get a bit smaller for a period.

"We just need to ensure all the brands in the country remain viable and that may also be why the dealer numbers are reducing."

The automotive industry is no different to any other in that it goes through ups and downs, although it's currently "experiencing a multitude of challenges" on the economic and regulatory fronts, says Farmer.

"Good times never last and neither do bad times and perseverance. The past two years have been hard but also good in terms of getting us match fit and after two of probably the most challenging years, we're seeing some strong results start to flow through, which I think the whole industry deserves." ☺

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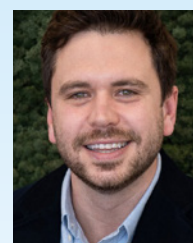
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Heading up motors

Trade Me has unveiled Brendan Hall as its new head of motors and as a member of the company's executive leadership team.



Brendan Hall

Hall most recently led technology in New Zealand, and digital product here and across the Tasman, for BP's mobility and convenience business.

Previously, he was responsible for launching and growing Amazon Australia's third-party marketplace business. During his tenure at Carsales.com.au he

was general manager of digital retailing.

He says: "I'm looking forward to building on the great work the team has already done, getting closer to our customers, and continuing to create value for buyers and sellers."

Trade Me says Hall will draw on his experience to also prioritise delivering timely insights to dealers and build wider relationships with broader industry partners.

Hall replaces Jeremy Wade, who is moving into a different role in Trade Me's wider team. ☺

Policy risks distorting supply

The clean car standard (CCS) has been labelled as “no longer fit for purpose” with calls for it to undergo a major overhaul or be replaced with more effective and equitable alternatives.

Concerns have been raised by industry organisations that the scheme may be impeding efforts to reduce transport emissions, will distort the supply of stock to New Zealand, and threaten the future of businesses in the new and used-import sectors.

The comments come in submissions to the government about its plans to make changes to the CCS, such as how carbon credits can be traded and removing weight adjustments for setting carbon dioxide (CO₂) targets for different models.

Chris Bishop, Minister of Transport, believes proposals outlined in the Land Transport

(Clean Vehicle Standard) Amendment Bill (No 2) will support importers to bring in vehicles that are more fuel efficient and cheaper for Kiwis to run.

The view from industry – as outlined in feedback submitted late last month – tells a different story, and raises fears the CCS will impose significant costs on importers and consumers.

The Motor Trade Association (MTA) was among those to provide feedback on the bill, and highlights what it means for used import and new franchise dealerships.

James McDowall, head of advocacy, notes these members



The cover of the MTA's submission

have faced major disruption in recent times because of frequent regulatory changes and policy reversals.

He describes the industry as being in a “highly vulnerable state” with closures

becoming increasingly common.

The dealer network has shrunk by more than 900 businesses, or 26 per cent, since 2017.

“While recent adjustments to the CCS were welcome, the scheme itself arguably stands in the way of meaningful emissions reductions,” says McDowall.

“Instead, it risks further destabilising the market by imposing significant cost burdens

on consumers and reducing vehicle variety in some sectors.

“The planned reduction in CCS carbon-dioxide targets over the coming years will lead to higher prices and less choice as importers and manufacturers shift towards lower-fee models. This could distort New Zealand's vehicle supply.”

He explains broader economic pressures, including rising fuel, and shipping and insurance costs, have impacted car affordability and are placing further strain on the market.

The MTA's submission states prices for used imports have risen while sales have dropped. There has also been a “noticeable decline” in variety, with the top three brands accounting for nearly 65 per cent of total year-to-date sales and three of the top 10 models making up almost 25 per cent of the overall volume.

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“As affordability declines, families are increasingly holding onto older, higher-emitting, lower safety-rated vehicles,” says McDowall.

“This is contributing to a rising national fleet age, now 15.6 years. This trend undermines efforts to reduce emissions, improve safety and modernise the fleet – highlighting the urgent need for policy change as the well-intentioned scheme shows signs of having the opposite effect.”

He believes the proposed extension of carbon credit lifespans from three to four years, and to allow the trading of credits between the new and used sectors, are commendable.

However, without access to credits and facing increasingly stricter CO2 targets, he predicts most dealers will be unable to benefit and costs will be passed on to consumers.

“The removal of the weighted average process may appear beneficial in the short term, but will accelerate market pressures as CO2 targets tighten. As a technology taker, New Zealand risks reduced model availability and increased pricing, further challenging dealers and consumers.”

The used sector has experienced a significant and sustained downturn since its peak in 2017 when passenger and commercial-vehicle sales reached

178,685 units. By 2024, the number was 104,002 units – a decline of 41.8 per cent over seven years.

“The outlook for 2025 is even more concerning,” says McDowall. “As of August 2025, year-to-date figures show a further 18.3 per cent drop compared with 2024, equating to 13,445 fewer vehicles.

“This positions 2025 to be the lowest trading year since 2012. It underscores the urgent need for policy stability and targeted support to prevent further erosion of this critical segment of the automotive industry.”

As for the new-vehicle market, year-to-date registrations have increased by 4,768 units, or 5.8 per cent, compared with the same period in 2024. However, volumes are down 14,203 units, or 14.05 per cent, against the same timescale in 2023.

McDowall points out 2023 was the lowest trading year in nearly a decade, excluding coronavirus-affected 2020, with total registrations falling below 2016’s 146,938 units. “This highlights that while there are signs of improvement, the market remains fragile and uneven in its recovery.”

Progressively stricter CCS targets, which mean most hybrids won’t meet future requirements, and unpredictability for importers in securing low-emissions models have been flagged as problems for the industry.



The MIA says consumer uptake of low and zero-emissions models is tracking at only one-third of the level needed for 2025 and 2026 under the CCS

The MTA states the price of used hybrids in New Zealand has “surged dramatically” with a model that sold for \$15,000 in 2019 now able to fetch up to \$22,000. This shift has been fuelled by growing international demand and reduced availability.

The country’s reliance on Japanese used imports, which account for more than 95 per cent of the second-hand imported market, “makes it particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in Japan’s vehicle turnover and manufacturing output”.

As a result, the flow of affordable, safer, low-emissions vehicles into Aotearoa has become increasingly unpredictable.

“Year-to-date figures show

57 per cent of used imports are between 10 and 16 years old, a segment that does little to reduce the average age of New Zealand’s fleet,” notes McDowall.

Looking ahead, there is concern the tougher CO2 regulations for 2026 and beyond could place extra financial strain on already vulnerable dealers, potentially accelerating business closures and compounding challenges faced by consumers and the wider industry.

McDowall notes the used-import sector is in a state of sustained decline, new-vehicle registrations have shown modest improvement but remain below historical norms, and the market continues to struggle with affordability and policy uncertainty.

“What is particularly concerning is that the growing shortfall in used vehicle year-to-date figures is not being offset by gains in new-vehicle sales. The current reduction of nearly 9,000 units is contributing to an increase in the average vehicle age and, in turn, higher emissions.

“The CCS, while well-intentioned, is proving to be an increasingly blunt instrument – penalising consumers and distorting supply without delivering meaningful emissions reductions.

“There is a growing consensus that the CCS, in its current form, is no longer fit for purpose and

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◀ should be either significantly reformed or replaced with more effective, equitable alternatives.”

New low-emissions models are entering the market. But their adoption will take time and will depend heavily on infrastructure, affordability and positive policy support.

TIME TO ‘RESET’ SCHEME

The Motor Industry Association (MIA) is calling for a recalibration of the CCS and believes failing to do so could impose costs on households without delivering real emissions reductions.

It says the legislation is now the most urgent challenge facing the light-vehicle sector because the targets are significantly outpacing consumer demand.

“Uptake of low and zero-emissions vehicles is tracking at only one-third of the level needed for 2025 and 2026, leaving a widening gap between ambition and market reality,” explains Aimee Wiley, chief executive officer.



The choice of new EVs available to Kiwis will be boosted when Xpeng launches its G6 here in late 2025

“This imbalance risks higher costs for consumers, reduced affordability and choice, and a serious credibility risk for New Zealand’s wider climate policy framework.”

As a result, the MIA has suggested a “pragmatic path forward” for the coalition to transform the CCS.

For 2026 and 2027, it recommends retaining weight adjustment but resetting it, altering penalties to prevent excessive consumer costs or market withdrawal and extending credit life to enable fairer trading.

It also suggests a “comprehensive reset” beyond 2027 that includes grounding

targets on independent economic and consumer research, changing ambitions in line with realistic adoption curves, and pairing supply obligations with demand-side measures such as tax relief and fleet incentives.

“The CCS remains vital to decarbonisation but it isn’t sustainable in its current form,” adds Wiley. “Recalibration is essential not to weaken ambition but to make it deliverable, fair and credible.”

She says the bill going through parliament introduces some positive steps and the MIA supports proposed enhancements to credit flexibility as these will provide relief when credits are

in ample supply and encourage credit trading.

However, it strongly opposes removing the weight adjustment from CO2 targets because of concerns it will shrink the credit pool, inflate credit costs and risks undermining climate outcomes while imposing higher costs on consumers.

Wiley says a better approach would be to retain weight-based targets that reflect real fleet composition, such as replacing the 1,200kg minimum with the mean vehicle weight of about 1,480kg.

Alternatively, the clean car standard’s settings could align with Australia’s 1,500kg baseline, which would provide trans-Tasman consistency.

“International practice – the EU, Australia and the US – recognises that heavier vehicles do more work and should be permitted higher emissions. Retaining weight adjustment ensures fairness across vehicle classes and maintains policy credibility.

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“Eliminating weight adjustment would reduce credits for EVs, increase debits for non-EVs and make compliance less achievable.

“Entry-level and family buyers would be hit hardest, while larger vehicles with limited zero-emissions alternatives would be disproportionately penalised.

“Acknowledging environmental concerns, retention of weight adjustment should be seen as temporary pragmatism until scalable low-emissions options exist for all large vehicles, such as SUVs, utes and vans, and also have adequate uptake in our market.”

Wiley adds that the current 1,200kg minimum for weight-adjustment calculations unfairly penalises small, light and fuel-efficient vehicles by applying tougher targets because of their classification. In turn, this reduces the available carbon credit pool and limits affordable consumer options.

Another problem identified by the MIA with the current regulations is the government’s ambitions outpacing the reality of the market.

“The CCS was designed to accelerate the decarbonisation of the fleet by encouraging importers to adjust the mix and volume of vehicles they import each year, to offset credits and debits, and achieve neutrality and avoid penalties.

“However, the CCS assumes consumer uptake of EVs and low-emissions vehicles will match supply-side ambition.”

The policy requires about a 20 per cent uptake of battery EVs in 2025, Wiley explains, but the actual figure so far this year is around seven to eight per cent. In 2026, the gap is expected to widen further as targets tighten and several key vehicle classes still lack viable zero-emissions options.

All this results in what she lists as “a growing shortfall, rising consumer costs and reduced environmental credibility”.

To help address the uptake



Ford’s Ranger and Toyota’s RAV4 are best-sellers in their segments. When it comes to changing the CCS, VIA backs scrapping weight adjustment for CO2 targets



of low and zero-emissions models, the MIA is calling for the coalition to deliver promised charging infrastructure and recast ambitions as evidence-based by benchmarking targets against proven international achievement.

Wiley adds: “With the right reset, the CCS can succeed in cutting emissions while protecting affordability, fairness and public confidence.”

IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES

The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) is concerned the government’s CCS proposals will provide “limited direct relief” from rising penalty costs and vehicle-sourcing challenges for used importers.

Its submission explains these importers supply nearly half of the country’s light vehicles and almost 80 per cent of those purchased by everyday Kiwis, which means the clean car standard directly determines affordability, choice and fleet turnover outcomes for most households.

Greig Epps, chief executive officer, says VIA supports the bill’s overall intent to reduce compliance costs and improve flexibility, and that several of the proposed changes represent pragmatic improvements.

“However, for independent importers – particularly those operating under CCS pay-as-you-go [PAYG] accounts – the bill provides limited direct relief from the immediate challenges of escalating penalties and a diminishing supply of eligible vehicles.

“This means that PAYG

importers, who are already paying penalties on around 70 per cent of stock, will soon face almost universal penalties with no realistic capacity to generate credits.

“Such an outcome is unsustainable and risks cutting off affordable, lower-emissions vehicles from households that rely on the used-import sector.

“Importantly, even under the less strict targets of the past few years, the CCS has already introduced penalties that have pushed costs beyond the reach of many New Zealanders.”

VIA contends changes in the bill fail to address current problems facing PAYG importers, such as “rapid credit exhaustion, escalating penalties and no pathway to generate new credits”.

Epps adds: “Without solutions to these structural issues, independent imports risk being unfairly disadvantaged, undermining affordability and slowing fleet turnover.

“We encourage parliament to adopt this bill, while also committing to further reforms that remove weight adjustment across passenger and commercial classes, protect supply and affordability, and preserve the vital role of independent imports in delivering affordable, lower-emissions vehicles to the majority of New Zealanders.”

Importers in the used sector are struggling to secure sufficient stock that meets ever-stricter targets, which has contributed to a decline in used-import volumes. This has led to older vehicles remaining in use for longer and

exacerbating challenges around cutting emissions.

As for the lifespan of credits, VIA believes extending this will provide greater certainty for planning and better aligns with the realities of vehicle shipping and car sales. “For the used-import sector, however, this change comes too late to make a practical difference,” adds Epps. “Credits are being exhausted, long before expiry dates would ever be reached.

“Penalties now far outweigh credit-generation opportunities, leaving independent importers facing an immediate compliance cliff.

“The fundamental challenge isn’t the duration of credit life, but the absence of any pathway for PAYG importers to generate new credits under current supply conditions.”

In a footnote to its submission, VIA explains that EV production in Japan has “failed to meet the optimistic expectations of cabinet decision papers”, with fewer than two per cent of its fleet being EVs and fewer still available for export.

Plans to scrap the weight adjustment for setting targets for light vehicles have received strong support from the association, which says adding a uniform target is fair, simple, technology-neutral and removes distortions that favoured heavier models over some efficient family cars.

“We urge the minister to exercise this new power at the earliest lawful date – January 1, 2026, at the latest – rather than waiting for wider target negotiations,” says Epps. “Certainty now will allow importers to contract earlier and preserve fleet turnover into 2026.”

The amendment bill was announced in August this year and passed its first reading in parliament before going out for consultation. Submissions closed in late September, with the transport and infrastructure select committee now considering feedback. It is set to report back to parliament in December. ☺

Positive signs on road ahead

Autofile delves into how big businesses are performing

Companies in the car industry and related sectors have been publishing annual reports and holding shareholder meetings over the past few months, as well as predicting what's to come.

In some cases, 2024/25 resulted in difficult trading conditions impacting profits and bottom lines.

Other businesses have gone on to paint different pictures of how the market is performing now and what's in store for the rest of the current financial year.

One common thread, however, is that there may still be economic pressures to come as New Zealand tries to escape the grip of recession.

What any upturn may look like and when it will happen remains uncertain as challenging conditions, low consumer confidence and rising unemployment linger, and the effect of official cash rate cuts have yet to "trickle down".

LONG-TERM GROWTH

Geneva Finance has entered 2025/26 with a positive outlook, underpinned by "solid performance" across its core businesses.

Quest Insurance, one of its divisions, continues to perform strongly. It has been benefiting from stable demand and effective distribution through its dealer network, say chairman Robin King and Malcolm Johnston, managing director.

"The business remains focused on deepening relationships with partners while expanding its reach through direct channels, supported by product development and responsive service delivery," they report.

"In the New Zealand lending operations, the priority remains



on growing a high-quality loan book that delivers sustainable returns. This includes refining credit-assessment practices and enhancing customer engagement."

A key strategy across the group is implementing and automating core processes via technology. Investment in digital capability is expected to boost efficiency, cut turnaround times and improve customer experience.

Essentially, the company remains focused on reinforcing its core finance and insurance operations, while positioning for long-term growth through innovation.

As for 2024/25, the Geneva group reported an audited pre-tax profit of \$6 million, which was up \$2.4m and 65.9 per cent from the previous reporting period.

The company's improved result was attributed to enhanced performances from its Tonga-based finance operations and Quest.

The latter posted a net profit before tax of \$7.3m in the past fiscal year to continue its annual double-digit growth trend.

Quest's gross written premiums rose by 20.4 per cent to \$55.8m, driven by robust demand and extra distribution channels.

Its claims costs remained stable, reflecting continued underwriting discipline, while investment income rose by 13.7 per cent to \$2.1m, supported by strong cash flows and positive term-deposit rates.

Quest also maintained a solid liquidity position with cash on-hand climbing by 40 per cent to \$42.1m.

King and Johnston report the past year's results highlight that "Quest's momentum is underpinned by financial management and

strengthening our operational foundation to support future growth".

The New Zealand lending operations, meanwhile, reported an annual \$3.4m loss up to March 31. However, that was \$3.2m better than the \$6.6m deficit in the prior year.

Lending rose by 4.6 per cent to \$55.6m and dealer floorplan funding grew by 4.5 per cent to top \$15.1m. Net receivables after provision increased to \$117.3m, up by 6.4 per cent.

The company says its key focus for lending is on improving the quality of loans approved and growing the loan book.

The Tonga operation, meanwhile, posted a \$2.1m pre-tax profit, up by 18.9 per cent on the previous year.

The board declared an interim dividend of 1c per share paid in

[continued on page 12]

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December. A final dividend of 1.5c was declared in respect of the year ending March 31. It was paid on July 25.

“These payments reflect continued commitment to delivering value to shareholders while maintaining a balanced approach to capital management and reinvestment in core business growth,” say King and Johnston.

Looking at the bigger picture, the company’s loan origination is conducted via three primary distribution channels – Geneva’s digital platforms and contact centre, through accredited finance brokers and in partnership with car dealerships.

About 83 per cent of lending is directed towards vehicle finance with the rest being unsecured personal loans.

As of March 31, its New Zealand receivables ledger totalled \$123.8m before provisions and was spread across 9,224 loans with an average size of \$12,500.

Its combined net-book value of receivables after provisions was \$117.3m, while the Tongan operation’s receivables ledger stood at \$10m prior to provisions over 1,882 loans with an average balance \$5,600.

Quest provides automobile insurance products irrespective of whether Geneva has provided finance. Its largest products by volume are comprehensive vehicle and mechanical breakdown insurance.

In the past fiscal year, Quest had about 140,000 active policies. It holds an AM Best financial strength rating of B and an issuer credit rating of bb+, both with stable outlooks.

CAR VOLUMES DROP

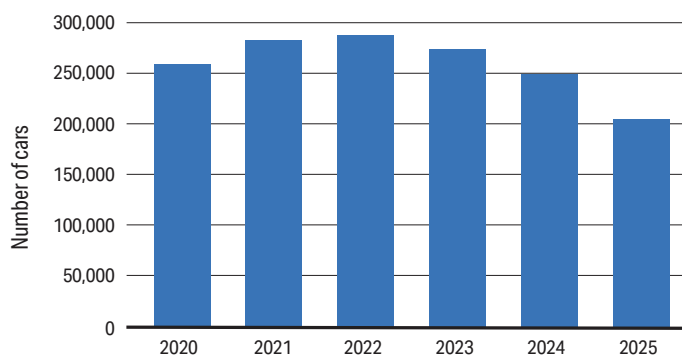
The number of vehicles coming into New Zealand through Auckland has fallen to the lowest level since 2013 after the port handled 172,000 units in the 12 months to June 30.

The total was down by 17 per cent from 2023/24, according to the company’s most recent annual report. In line with market conditions, volumes from roll-on, roll-off (ro-ro) vessels declined



Port of Auckland says its trans-shipments of cars increased during 2024/25

POAL's number of cars imported: Financial years 2020 - 2025



by 27 per cent, coming in below budget. On the flipside, trans-shipments, when cars sit on the wharf until taken on another ship to another port, increased.

Port of Auckland Ltd (POAL) says it has worked closely with customers to improve this service, and “vehicle importers have responded with highly positive feedback on our handling and support”.

The company has also strengthened its vehicle-handling capabilities by expanding capacity and enabling three ro-ro vessels to berth at the same time by utilising Jellicoe Wharf.

This positions the port to handle more vehicle volume as economic conditions improve, it explains.

Vehicle dwell times at the multi-cargo terminal during 2024/25 came in at 2.2 days, which excludes cars handled by the Toyota-leased facility.

While volumes of some goods, such as vehicles and construction materials, declined, the company’s overall performance remained “resilient” in the challenging economic environment.

It surpassed financial forecasts by posting record underlying net profit after tax (NPAT) of \$85.4m, up by 55 per cent from \$55.2m in 2024/25.

Revenue was \$393m for the year, up from \$339m, while statutory NPAT of \$90.8m included one-off revaluations and other items of \$5.4m.

These results were achieved by increasing container volumes, which rose by five per cent, building confidence in its ability to deliver reliable services and implementing a new pricing strategy.

Company chair Jan Dawson says the 2025 fiscal year was a defining one for the port as it focused on sustainable growth.

“We’ve delivered strong financial results, accelerated infrastructure investment and deepened partnerships.”

Highlights from the past year included handling 883,516 twenty-foot equivalent units, the most since 2020. Container import dwell times averaged two days at Fergusson Terminal.

The port is paying full-year trading dividends of \$52m and a \$45m special dividend to Auckland Council after the sale of its stake in Marsden Maritime Holdings.

In addition, it has paid down \$44m in debt to reinforce its financial strength ahead of infrastructure investment.

Andrew Clark, chief financial officer, believes POAL is well-positioned to invest for the future

and to create long-term value for the city.

He says: “Our investments today are setting the stage for a stronger, more resilient port, playing a vital role in connecting New Zealand to the world.”

“Since the end of the financial year, we have received fast-track consent for a new berth at the northern end of Bledisloe Wharf and to complete Fergusson North.”

DRIVING STRONGER MARGINS

Turners Automotive Group says it remains on-track to notch up a record first-half performance for 2025/26.

It expects NPAT to be more than 10 per cent ahead of the same period in 2024/25, which hit a high of \$26.9m.

The update by Todd Hunter, chief executive officer, comes “despite a challenging economic backdrop, low levels of consumer confidence, restrictive interest rates and rising unemployment”.

He says its automotive retail trading during the first half is ahead of 2024/25 with a drop in consignment vehicles offset by higher sales of owned cars.

There were some temporary headwinds from Turners’ expansion in Christchurch during the first quarter, “but those sites are now gaining momentum”.

The launch of the second Tina From Turners marketing campaign has resulted in a \$600,000 upweighted media investment to support it with gains to build up over coming quarters.

Initiatives are expected to drive stronger margins and volumes in the second half of the 2026 fiscal year “with benefits from the campaign flowing through, combined with the expanded Christchurch footprint and an improving economic environment”.

◀ Further branch expansion is on the table and several “live” negotiations are in place.

Turners’ finance division experienced strong book growth in the first four months of 2025/26 with its loan book up by five per cent compared to March this year.

Maintaining credit discipline remains a priority and book growth is anticipated for the rest of this financial year, while “the tailwind of lower interest rates is expected to underpin interest margins”.

The insurance business is performing well with earned premium holding up and claims ratios stable. New distribution arrangements and direct sales channels “are gaining momentum, and our vehicle insurance portfolio underwritten by Vero is expected to continue its strong growth trajectory”.

As for credit management, “the struggling economy is leading to increased consumer arrears and our level of debt referred is increasing”.

Hunter’s update followed the company’s annual general meeting in late August, which Autofile attended.

“There are plenty of opportunities ahead of us and we’re working hard on that. We’re almost trying to bring a new-car kind of feel to used cars [with our branches],” he says.

“This iterative process we’ve had around branches has sped up our delivery in what we know works, getting the right configuration between operations and office and admin space, and how to configure the processing part into the retailing part of those sites.

“We have a very kind of cookie-cutter approach to this now.”

About \$36m was invested in the three new Christchurch branches, which are all owned by Turners.

“I think pretty quickly we’ll be

There are plenty of opportunities ahead of us and we’re working hard on that

– Todd Hunter

looking for a fourth based on the way things are tracking so far,” says Hunter. “We’re definitely seeing upside from the three over the one, so it’s been a great move.”

He adds the used-car market is proving its resilience and, while people are spending less, there are still lots of cars changing hands.

“We’ve seen a lift in activity but with the continued pressure on household budgets we’re seeing demand for lower-value cars at the expense of higher-value cars be very strong. Our expectation is that will revert as the economy improves.”

The mix between consignment and owned cars in automotive retail has changed in the first half of this year.

Lease volumes are down and

some corporate customers have extended leases rather than taking on new commitments, which has meant fewer cars coming back to the business.

“I would consider that a timing issue,” explains Hunter. “Those cars will come back. They just haven’t come back in the first half.”

“The team has done a super job making up for that by buying more cars locally so we’re still running ahead in terms of unit sales on last year. We’re expecting the second half to deliver strong margin and volumes as the economy improves, and overall demand improves.”

PROFIT DIP FORECAST

2 Cheap Cars has warned its shareholders that annual profit for the current fiscal year will be down compared to the previous 12 months.

While vehicle sales are projected to exceed 2024/25’s total, the company does not anticipate NPAT for 2025/26 reaching the previous year’s level.

[continued on page 14]



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That's based on first-quarter results for the current fiscal year, which were below expectations as sales volumes and gross margins fell short of budgeted targets.

"The company successfully achieved cost savings," it says. "However, these were not sufficient to fully offset the decline in gross margin."

It recorded NPAT of \$3.3m in the 12 months to the end of March amid a "turbulent market". That was down by 46.8 per cent from \$6.2m in 2023/24.

Despite forecasting another drop in profit, the group notes sales improved in July. However, the market remains uncertain and inconsistent.

"As 2 Cheap Cars advances its vertical integration strategy, including expanding its internal reconditioning capabilities, there are short-term pressures on its supply chain and workforce.

"As a result, maintaining optimal inventory levels across the network has become a challenge. Measures are being implemented that are expected to increase car acquisition and boost reconditioning throughput."

Initiatives include "refining" the company's operational structure, upskilling staff and using reliable partners to maintain throughput and flexibility while vehicle volumes exceed internal capacity.

"While strategic direction remains unchanged, there is additional emphasis on enhancing supply-chain responsiveness. This will assist the company to take advantage of opportunities in the market as it improves."

MORE CAPACITY NEEDED

Port of Tauranga says the economy is missing out on hundreds of millions of dollars because approval for its expansion plans has been delayed – again.

The company adds its productivity is being hampered by insufficient capacity to handle rising volumes of cargo and disrupted shipping schedules.

Constrained berth capacity impacts productivity because the country's biggest port is unable to provide flexibility for vessels arriving



outside their booked windows. Only 55 per cent of ships arrived on their agreed schedule in 2024/25.

Board chair Julia Hoare is frustrated by fresh legal obstacles to Tauranga's long-awaited expansion with the high court ruling its fast-track application to be deficient because of a drafting error.

"Ongoing delays in obtaining consent for Stella Passage are reaching crisis point as the port is forced to turn away services due to a lack of capacity," she says.

"Ultimately, it is the economy and all New Zealanders that suffer. This is critical infrastructure essential for efficient two-way trade.

"In the midst of significant interest from international container lines we're unable to support trade opportunities because we don't have the berth space."

Hoare adds Tauranga was forced to scotch a new shipping service to the Americas that would have offered local exporters and importers savings of between \$65m and \$90m, while the new container wharf and facilities could deliver \$485m-\$749m in annual economic earnings by 2032.

The company has, however, reported that NPAT rose to \$173.4m in 2024/25 compared to \$90.8m in the previous period.

There was a one-off gain of \$49m from consolidating assets in Northland after it sold its stake

in Northport. Subsidiaries and investments posted improved earnings.

Underlying profit amounted to \$126m versus \$102.7m as revenue increased to \$464.7m from \$417.4m.

Total cargo came in at 25.3 million tonnes, up from 23.6 million. Exports of kiwifruit, up by 30.9 per cent, meat and dairy drove an overall seven per cent rise in cargo while coal, fertiliser and stock feed boosted imports.

Modest import growth is being supported by strong export performance in dairy and horticulture, but worldwide trade tensions and tariff uncertainty continue to cast a shadow on market confidence.

Globally, the port and shipping sector is facing challenges including container fleet oversupply, trade slowing in some markets and geopolitical disruptions, such as Red Sea shipping diversions, leading to increased costs.

"Margin pressure on shipping lines, along with carbon-pricing pressure, can be expected to accelerate the cascading of larger, newer ships onto Oceania routes," says Hoare.

"We remain confident in the resilience of Tauranga thanks to strong customer partnerships, diverse cargo mix and variety of income streams supported by the

operational strength of our port team.

"The new financial year has started well despite the ongoing frustrations and delays in progressing the Stella Passage development."

THE BIGGER PICTURE

There are emerging signs of a recovery in retail spending with gradual increases in the volume of consumer sales in recent quarters.

That's according to the latest consensus forecast published by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER).

With about 77 per cent of mortgages due for repricing within the next 12 months, it's being predicted that repayments will further reduce for many Kiwis.

In turn, that's expected to support a continued recovery in households' discretionary spending, which signals some good news for the automotive industry.

In contrast, the residential investment outlook for the coming year has deteriorated while forecasted export growth has been revised lower for the March 2026 fiscal year, but higher for the following year.

The consensus forecasts, with the most recent being released on September 15, collate the views of the Treasury, five banks – ANZ, ASB, Bank of NZ, Kiwibank and Westpac – and the NZIER itself.

Spending growth by households has been revised higher for next year with the volume of sales continuing to increase in the June quarter.

"Households are feeling more positive, albeit still cautious about making big-ticket purchases," says Ting Huang, senior economist at the NZIER.

"The Reserve Bank has indicated that about half of the impact of cuts to the official cash rate to date is yet to be realised, which is expected to support a continued recovery in household spending over coming years.

"Beyond 2026, growth is expected to pick up as the full impact of interest-rate cuts is transmitted to broader economic activity." ☺

Extra online

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In New Zealand's fast-evolving automotive landscape, dealerships that treat finance and insurance (F&I) as a core business strategy are better positioned for sustainable growth.

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Assurant's innovative product portfolio includes mechanical breakdown insurance (MBI), payment protection insurance (PPI), guaranteed asset protection (GAP) and motor vehicle insurance. These products address real customer concerns, from financial uncertainty to car damage.

An example is Assurant's MBI products, which offer customisable coverage tailored to each client's needs. These solutions shield customers from repair costs and reinforce their confidence in your dealership.

When customers drive off with protection against mechanical failures, MBI delivers peace of mind and builds long-term loyalty, giving them a reason to return in the future.

Training and efficiency accelerates performance

Successful F&I integration relies on transparent and customer-focused conversations delivered by well-trained staff. Assurant invests heavily in dealership success through tailored programmes that combine in-person coaching with a modern and



interactive digital-learning platform.

Training covers advanced sales techniques, product expertise and customer engagement strategies. The result is faster transaction times, improved satisfaction, and more seamless experiences across the showroom and finance office.

"We've partnered with Assurant for more than 30 years and their commitment to our success has never wavered. Product training and support from our account manager have been outstanding, and no challenge has been too big for Assurant to solve. Their proactive approach ensures our team is confident, our customers are well-informed and satisfaction remains high." – Shane Drummond, managing director of The Car Company, Nelson

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Assurant's dealer solutions convert one-time buyers into repeat and loyal customers while generating passive income.

Returning customers buy add-ons, use your service department, and refer friends and family. Referrals to family and friends are considered one of the most effective forms of marketing due to the level of trust in personal recommendations.

GAP is central to this approach. A key

feature is the deposit benefit in which a customer receives a cash deposit redeemable at your dealership toward their next vehicle – if their vehicle is declared a total loss. This supports customers during a tough time and brings loyal business back through your doors.

"We've partnered with Assurant since launching our business in 2019 and they've consistently demonstrated a commitment to delivering optimal outcomes. In my opinion, their GAP policy is the best on the market. The additional benefits far exceed those of historical GAP policies, including competitors using outdated structures. Customers receive cash back to use at their own discretion and the contribution towards their next vehicle supports strong client retention. Several clients have said this GAP policy and its benefits have enhanced their experience during what's typically a stressful time."

– Brad Wiseman, head of finance and insurance at Trust Motors, south Auckland

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With a focus on innovative product design, training and genuine customer care, Assurant delivers a comprehensive partnership model that empowers New Zealand dealerships to compete and thrive in today's market.



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Explore Assurant's advantages

Seeking insights from dealers

The views of hundreds of franchise dealers are being sought as part of an annual survey with organisers casting their net even further this year.

About 500 dealerships were emailed a link to a range of questions at the start of October by the Motor Trade Association (MTA), which is hoping to get a response rate of at least 50 per cent.

The survey, known as the dealer-distributor relationship index (DDRI), has been expanded in 2025 beyond businesses selling light vehicles to also cover moped, motorcycle and heavy-vehicle franchises.

Larry Fallowfield, MTA's sector manager for dealers, says: "Autofile has supplied us with information from its Dealer Directory to help ensure there's no one missing from our own database because it's important we get to as many dealers as we can.

"Our goal is to send the survey to every franchise dealer in New Zealand and the information from



The survey provides an opportunity for traders to be honest and frank
– Larry Fallowfield

Autofile has helped us to expand our list."

This year is the third time the survey, which takes about 10-12 minutes to complete, has been conducted digitally. The deadline for responses is 11.59pm on November 16.

Fallowfield explains its purpose is to produce results and create discussion points that dealers can use to inform their distributors what the industry is thinking.

He adds the more people who answer the questions on a scale ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied, the more accurate the

final report of the survey will be.

"The first year we went digital in 2023 there was a poor response rate. Part of the challenge for us is that a dealer principal may get 100 emails daily, so by the end of the day our one with the link may have dropped off their screens.

"However, I would hope this year we can get more than 50 per cent of all the dealers across New Zealand."

As part of the MTA's communications strategy for the DDRI, it will also be running a banner on Autofile's website with a QR code people can scan to gain

direct access to the survey.

"We send out reminders to complete the survey on a regular basis and also ran a banner on Autofile last year, which got a lot of uptake so we're repeating that this year," says Fallowfield.

"The survey provides an opportunity for traders to be honest and frank about their relationships with brands and what those brands offer.

"Those answers then go into a report that hopefully encourages some engagement between dealers and distributors around what's happening in the market."

Only dealers who participate in the survey, which is now in its 19th year, will receive a copy of the report.

The bulk of the questions have remained largely unchanged to allow year-on-year comparisons, although some related to EVs were added in 2024 while this year's survey also tackles the subject of advanced driver-assistance systems. ☺

Getting more commercial clout

A dealership dedicated to light commercials, which has opened in the Waikato, hopes to tap into growing interest for such models thanks to the government's Investment Boost package.

Winger Motors Hamilton Commercial sells JAC utes and Fiat Professional vans, alongside used commercials and SUVs, from its site in Te Rapa Road, Hamilton.

The branch is run by Dominic DeGiorgio with the main Winger Motors dealership, which supports the commercial site with its parts and service facility a stone's throw away.

Paul Burborough, dealer principal of Winger Motors Hamilton, says the commercial operation is located on one of the city's busiest roads.

"There is a huge demand for



Dominic DeGiorgio, left, branch manager of Winger Motors Hamilton Commercial, and dealer principal Paul Burborough

commercials in the region, even more so with the Investment Boost incentive," he adds.

"With the Waikato having a large population in agriculture and trade industries, demand for utes and vans has always been high. We also needed an offering for our current client base."

Investment Boost was launched

after May's budget announcement. It is a tax incentive for companies to invest in assets, such as machinery, tools and equipment, and allows businesses to deduct 20 per cent of a new asset's value from that year's taxable income on top of normal depreciation.

Burborough says the commercial market remains strong, and now

having JAC and Fiat Professional on-board helps it "provide a great alternative for our customers".

"We've seen an influx of new ute offerings in the market, giving more choice for our buyers. We have seen spec levels increase and pricing become very competitive."

Winger Motors Hamilton Commercial currently offers two Fiat Professional vehicles – the Ducato and the all-new Scudo.

The T9 Luxury is the sole JAC current model available, but Burborough notes the marque's Hunter Super Hybrid ute attracted a lot of attention at this year's National Fieldays.

"We await with interest any announcements of when that ute may enter the market, which will hopefully be later this year or early next." ☺

Breaking free from budget trap

If you're still tipping most of your digital budget into Meta via Facebook and Instagram, you are not alone but could be paying too much for too little.

In 2024, Meta's cost per-thousand impressions jumped by more than 30 per cent. That means page hits cost more while targeting has weakened due to privacy changes.

For Kiwi dealerships chasing leads and market share, the "all-in on Meta" playbook is no longer efficient. It still has a role in marketing, especially for awareness and retargeting. However, when it once delivered strong full-funnel returns, it now works best as part of a diversified strategy.

Savvy dealers are capping Meta at about 40 per cent of total digital budgets and redirecting the rest into higher-intent, lower-cost channels. These typically deliver 25-40 per cent savings and reaches audiences in less cluttered environments. They include:

- ▶ Digital audio and streaming – Spotify, iHeartRadio, Rova and ZM podcasts reach targeted, local audiences.
- ▶ Digital out-of-home (DOOH) – regional digital billboards, like Woolworths Cartology, target by commuting or lifestyle patterns.

- ▶ Programmatic display – premium placements on trusted local news sites, such as the NZ Herald, Stuff and automotive marketplaces.

Meta adverts can still drive showroom traffic, but not if you're just boosting stock posts.

Many dealers focus 90 per cent of creative on offers-only ads. However, that sacrifices long-term brand equity.

The IPA's Binet and Field research suggests a 60-40 split is most effective. That's 60 per cent brand building through video, storytelling and community content, and 40 per cent direct response with inventory, offers and calls to action.

Brand building doesn't have to be big budget. Quick walkaround or delivery videos often outperform polished creative because authenticity builds trust, which drives sales.

Dealers shifting to this 60-40 balance have seen lifts in branded Google searches and stronger lead-to-sale conversion rates without upping their total spend.



JAMES HENDRY
Director, sales and operations
AdTorque Edge NZ

DIVERSIFY PLATFORMS

The goal isn't just to chase cheaper channels, it's about alignment. Third-party sites, such as Auto Trader, Driven and Trade Me, are often treated as pure listing platforms, but they are also

valuable advertising channels.

Running one programmatic campaign across them consolidates spend and simplifies optimisation.

Digital audio is also underused. A targeted advert to commuters aged 35-plus may achieve greater cut-through than another radio spot or crowded social feed.

The key is don't cut Meta blindly, simply rebalance. Keep it at 40 per cent and then reallocate 20-30 per cent into proven alternatives that are cost-effective and tap into fresh, high-intent buyers who aren't already being hit with the same social ads.

MEASURE MOVING NEEDLE

Diversification increases data points, but that's only useful if you're tracking the right metrics. Focus on cost per lead, lead-to-sale

conversion rate, profit per sold unit, reach per dollar spent and return on ad spend by channel.

Tools such as GA4 and AdTorque Edge's ALICE can help or work with your dealer consultant to set up proper tracking. Review results monthly and adjust budgets accordingly. If you're reporting only on impressions, clicks and likes, your measurement stack is out of date.

Meta still matters, but dealers who diversify, fuel every funnel stage and track meaningful metrics generate better results without bigger budgets.

Smart spending is not about shrinking investment. It's about unlocking better returns because in 2025 it isn't about who spends the most but the smartest.

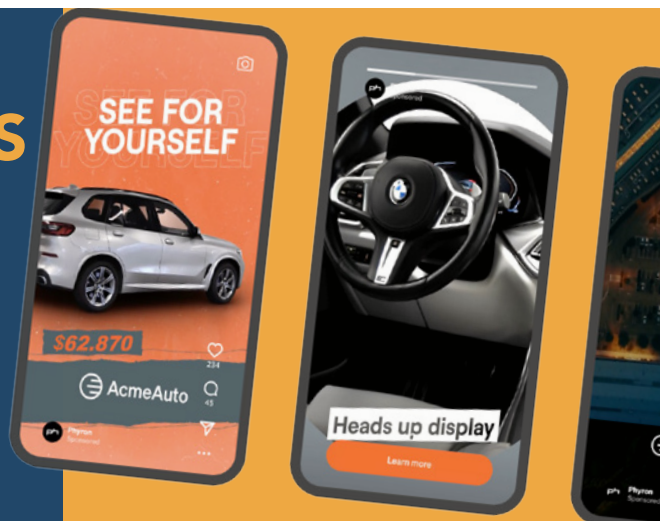
SMART BUDGET SHIFTS

- ▶ Cap Meta spend at 40 per cent and test local, non-saturated channels.
- ▶ Add brand-building content to balance offers-driven ads.
- ▶ Run programmatic campaigns on classified and review sites with one budget and optimiser.
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Industry movers

CAMERON THOMAS, who has more than 20 years of experience in global and local markets, is now GWM's country manager for New Zealand.



He was most recently network strategy director at Ford NZ after spending more than nine years as director of marketing.

During his decade with the blue oval, Thomas, pictured, drove strategic growth, strengthened customer engagement and elevated the dealer network's performance.

Before joining Ford, he worked for Vodafone in Europe and spent 15 months as GM Holden's brand manager in New Zealand from February 2006.

John Kett, chief commercial officer of GWM ANZ, says: "Having local leadership on the ground is essential to building trust and maintaining strong connections with customers and dealers."

JERARD D'UNIENVILLE has started as national sales manager of Avanti Finance's automotive division.



He has experience in sales and business development having held senior sales and management positions in the automotive, energy and fast-moving consumer goods sectors.

He previously spent nearly five years as category manager of merchandising at Woolworths New Zealand.

Before that, he was the national sales manager at Jaguar Land Rover NZ in addition to Total Energies, Fuchs Lubricants and, over 13 years, was in the automotive franchise space with Audi and Renault.

MARK HARLAND is now chief operating officer of Denza, BYD's luxury brand that's launching down under. He was previously chief operating officer at EVDirect, which is BYD's exclusive distributor across the Tasman.



Harland spent 15 years at General Motors where he led marketing, customer experience, sales and operations in North America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Australia.

SEAN TUPP has been appointed national sales manager for GAC Motor NZ. He has more than 25 years' industry experience.

Tupp worked as area sales and fleet manager for MG Motor NZ from 2022-23 before spending more than two years as national sales manager for GWM and Haval.

His past positions have included more than a decade with European Motor Distributors as general manager of Skoda NZ, Audi's national sales manager and sales manager for Volkswagen.

Tupp spent five years as account manager at Ford from 1999 to 2004 and was general manager of sales for Holden from 2015-18.

PAUL JOHNSTON has become Tower's CEO after initially being appointed to the role on an interim basis in February 2025.

He joined the insurer as chief financial officer in January 2022 and he previously worked for Chubb, where he was CFO and director for the Far East.

Before that, Johnston spent four years at AIG in senior management positions, and has had roles with the National Australia Bank, Deloitte and Meridian Energy.



Tom Wylie, of MMNZ

Marque bolsters team with four promotions

Mitsubishi Motors New Zealand (MMNZ) has made four internal appointments as part of a strategy to strengthen its national operations and support dealer performance.

Tom Wylie has been appointed head of vehicle sales and operations, while Nathan Thomas is now in charge of after-sales.

Steven Blackmore has taken on the technical-services manager role and Elliot Gill has been made senior technical adviser.

MMNZ says the changes reflect its commitment to recognising and developing talent from within its ranks, an approach the company notes fosters deep product knowledge, strengthens dealer relationships and preserves its "family" culture.

This internal focus has led to high-performing team members being promoted and follows the success of similar leadership appointments two years ago.

Warren Brown, president and chief executive officer, says the latest promotions are proof the company's in-house talent pipeline is working as intended.

"We always look to promote internally when the right people are already here," he adds.

"It's a successful approach that builds loyalty, keeps our family culture strong, and means our leaders already understand what matters to dealers and customers."

Wylie joined MMNZ in 2021. He has held key roles in finance and after-sales, most recently as head of after-sales, and has now shifted to

vehicle sales and dealer operations.

"I'm pumped for a new challenge," he says. "I have huge respect and admiration for our dealer partners."

"I'm excited to bring my background in parts and service to help find synergies across the business, and build on strong foundations to support our network."

Thomas joined the company from a dealership background a decade ago. He has progressed from technical-services adviser to manager of technical, and is now



Nathan Thomas

head of after-sales.

"This is an amazing opportunity," Thomas enthuses. "I hope to use my industry experience to keep improving our dealer network and help it be the best it can be for our customers."

Blackmore brings prior dealership experience to the technical-services manager role after being MMNZ's technical-services adviser since 2021.

"Steven's combination of technical knowledge and overall diagnostic expertise makes him a natural fit for this leadership position," says Brown.

Gill, who joined MMNZ in 2023 as a technical-services adviser, has been promoted to senior technical adviser thanks to his "problem-solving skills and strong insight".

Brown adds: "These appointments reflect the true depth of talent already in our business. I'm confident they will further strengthen a team that thrives on working together to keep raising the bar for our customers." ☺

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

Electric boost via housing density

A study released in June by Statistics New Zealand highlighted major changes taking place in our housing patterns and notably the move towards increasing densities in our main cities.

This trend has major implications for many aspects of daily life, not least for ownership of cars and the transition to vehicles more suited to high-density living.

The shorter, more localised travelling distances which characterise higher density living and lifestyles make cleaner models, such as battery electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids, ideal options when it comes to choices of personal transport.

This is particularly so in major urban centres such as Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch where traditional single-family homes are rapidly being superseded by townhouses, apartments and mixed-use developments.

An interesting question, therefore, arises. Can we “springboard” off this transformation in urban planning and housing development to accelerate the move to cleaner car options, thereby materially assisting this country to meet its international obligations in emissions reduction?

As things currently stand, it doesn't look hopeful. We've seen a substantial drop in EV sales over the past two years.

This decline primarily is attributable to the removal of the clean car discount and the subsequent introduction of road-user charges for EVs, which has made them less financially

attractive to consumers.

These developments, together with the current settings of the clean vehicle standard, are seeing our emissions reduction goals becoming harder to achieve and not easier. That's an argument for another day.

However, there are measures the MIA believes can be taken right now to address other factors contributing to reduced sales of low-emissions models.

These include lingering concerns about charging infrastructure, battery longevity and resale values, as well as the overall affordability of vehicles in the current economic climate.

The MIA's view is that decarbonisation of transport is vital for the transition to zero emissions and we believe reducing pollution from the current fleet should be a key focus.

We have argued for a national network that includes ultra-rapid charging on the highway network, fast charging at key destinations like shopping malls, and slower AC charging where EVs are parked for longer periods of time, such as hotels, motels and holiday parks.

We suggest the latter should also include key tourist destinations. For chargers on the highway network, provision also needs to be made to accommodate



AIMEE WILEY
Chief executive officer,
Motor Industry Association

heavy electric vehicles at charging sites on key freight routes.

But the transformation taking place with our housing preferences offers synergies that could be leveraged to boost EV uptake alongside moving to higher density living.

One relatively easy step would be to provide funding support for home-charger installation given about 80 per cent of charging is done where EV owners live.

There's also the opportunity to mandate installing wallbox chargers for all the new multi-unit dwellings now coming onto the market in ever-increasing numbers.

Good precedents exist for measures such as this. For example, grants are made available by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority for the installation of heat pumps, efficient burners, and wall and ceiling insulation in people's homes.

The aim is to make where we live warmer and healthier at the same time as reducing energy consumption and emissions.

Would it not also assist the move to lower-emissions vehicles to extend that kind of support to cleaner transport options?

Widespread home charging, especially with smart chargers, would allow for EVs to be topped

up during off-peak electricity hours. This would help to prevent large increases in peak demand on the national grid, which could otherwise lead to a need for expensive network upgrades and higher power bills for all consumers.

A further potential benefit would be to enable vehicle-to-grid charging so EV owners could send electricity stored in their cars' batteries back to the national grid.

As our energy system becomes more renewable, we face the challenge of intermittency inherent in wind and solar generation, and this vehicle-to-grid option could provide an extra source of fast and flexible battery-energy storage.

Public opinion is far from settled on the pros and cons of our changing urban landscape with more and more people moving into apartments and townhouses.

There are those who would argue that higher-density housing reduces the need to own a vehicle at all. That would, of course, rely on the availability of reliable and reasonably priced public-transport options as an alternative, which is by no means a given.

In addition, it's difficult to imagine a future where Kiwis would renounce their well-known affinity for, if not love of, their cars.

But perhaps with the right mix of planning and incentives, coupled with changes taking place in the way New Zealanders live, we can continue to enjoy the mobility and freedom that comes with owning cars at the same time as achieving meaningful reductions in their emissions. ☺

We have
seen a
substantial
drop in EV
sales



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The month that was... October

October 18, 1999

More than 10% price rise on cards

Cars in New Zealand would never again be as cheap in the wake of a weakening Kiwi dollar with no sign of a turnaround until, perhaps, the middle of 2000.

BNZ chief economist Tony Alexander said our currency was likely to stay as it was or weaken even further. "I believe that it's overvalued from too many imports and not enough exports," he added. "I anticipate the dollar will drop by between 10 and 15 cents in the next 10 to 20 years."

Most vehicle distributors and wholesalers agreed that unless there was a drastic turnaround in the foreign-exchange situation, price hikes would follow in early 2000.

John Osborne, Penrose Vehicle Importers Ltd's managing director, expected new and used-import sticker prices to jump by between 10 and 20 per cent over the next 12 months following a possible further 10 per cent depreciation in the dollar.

"It's going to make the industry tougher and tighter," said Osborne. "What it hasn't done is stop the junk coming in. By junk, I mean 1991 and 1992 cars that have done more than 100,000km."



October 29, 2004

LTSA delays tender process

The timeframe for the Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) implementing a new entry-certification scheme for used imports was delayed amidst suggestions it wouldn't work, and further consideration and consultation was needed.

The LTSA cited internal restructuring as the reason for the delay, saying the board of directors for Land Transport NZ (LTNZ) – the agency due to be created when the LTSA and Transfund merged in December 2004 – would need to endorse the final decision.

However, some experts had suggested the scheme might also have been delayed because of submissions from the car industry requesting more consultation.

According to the new timetable, an evaluation panel had until November 12 to consider proposals submitted by transport service delivery agents.

At the end of that period, those agents would be asked to prepare presentations to provide more information and address any specific questions the panel might have.

The presentations were to be held in November. The LTSA's recommendations would be considered by the incoming LTNZ board with the preferred tenderer announced by February 1, 2005.



Fourth quarter, 2005

On yer bike!

Debate over issues such as fuel consumption and vehicle emissions intensified because the price of petrol had continued to rise.

In addition, the looming spectre of the Kyoto Protocol had put the Labour government under pressure to decrease New Zealand's carbon output.

Dealers were wondering how far the Beehive would go to drive Kiwis out of their vehicles.

In November, the National Business Council for Sustainable Development provided the government with a 50-page report recommending that consumers be offered cash incentives for buying fuel-efficient models and be penalised for buying gas-guzzlers.

The government confirmed it was investigating that option, which reopened a debate that had been raging for more than a year.

According to figures provided by the Motor Industry Association, the monthly average fuel consumption for all business cars purchased dropped from a weighted average high of 11l/100km in May to 9.9l/100km in October – a reduction of 10 per cent in just six months.

The business council said its research showed petrol would have to reach \$4 per litre to eliminate the difference between a normal vehicle and a fuel-efficient model for an average new-car purchase.



October 27, 2006

Visible smoke test begins today

A five-second visible smoke check was introduced for vehicles as part of their warrant and certificate of fitness inspections.

As part of the process for testing cars, authorised inspectors were required to check for fumes coming out of tailpipes.

The vehicle was to be idled for five seconds and then accelerated to 2,500rpm – or half of its maximum engine speed if that was lower – for five more seconds.

If the engine produced clearly visible smoke, the owner would then be required to have remedial work completed before it could pass the inspection.

The aim of the rule was to check that vehicles weren't gross polluters. A Ministry of Transport study in 2006 estimated that between one and two per cent of petrol-powered vehicles could be affected by this test.

Visible emissions caused by the condensation of water vapour didn't count as smoke and the engine was required to be at normal operating temperature for the test.



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AI commandeering driver's seat

For a while, one of my favourite topics was how artificial intelligence in automotive revolved around the promise and perils of autonomous vehicles.

Like many, I was cautiously optimistic for a future where machines could safely carry us between places reducing crashes and improving mobility, but I had two major reservations.

First, I didn't see how modern AI technology could give the depth of context needed to interact with the real world.

After all, it's not just about staying between painted road lines. It's about anticipation, negotiation and judgement. Without contextual understanding, I argued autonomous driving would never be safe.

Second, I was sure that even if some technical hurdles were overcome, it would be rolled out in the wrong way.

For the first time in history, we would have vehicles being used for fewer than one passenger per trip. Yet our road networks and urban planning aren't designed for fleets of empty or near-empty cars circling between rides.

I was also deeply sceptical of safety claims.

One of the automotive industry's favourite talking points – that around 90 per cent of crashes are caused by human error so removing people would eliminate about 90 per cent of casualties – was and still is disingenuous.

It ignores that countless collisions are avoided every day by human intuition, courtesy and

split-second judgement.

As the years passed, my concerns seemed to be validated. Apart from a handful of companies still determined to beta test their technology on public roads, effectively using us as unwilling safety drivers, the industry has largely pulled back.

Most carmakers have delayed or abandoned timelines for fully autonomous vehicles, quietly acknowledging the technology is harder and the risks greater than earlier promises suggested.

While the dream of a driverless future has receded, AI in cars hasn't gone away. Instead, it has found another foothold and one that may ultimately have just as much impact on consumers.

The real advance of AI in automotive isn't autonomy, but data and attention. Today's cars are rolling data platforms. AI is embedded in infotainment systems, predictive maintenance tools, navigation and settings that learn motorists' habits.

Vehicles are increasingly sold as subscription platforms with bundles of features that can be switched on or off by remote update, often for a fee.

Every interaction inside becomes a data point – routes, playlists, climate-control preferences and even driving style. That data is then used to personalise the experience, and upsell, nudge and tether you more tightly to the brand.

The advertising industry



KIT WILKERSON
Head of policy and strategy
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provides a useful parallel. Artificial intelligence in digital ads has transformed marketing into a game of precision targeting, predictive analytics and dynamic pricing.

The same logic is now seeping into cars.

If you think of them as platforms, the owner isn't only a driver but a captive audience whose attention, preferences and behaviours can be continuously shaped.

For consumers, this shift carries several consequences. First is the rising total cost of ownership.

The sticker price is no longer the whole story.

Features once sold as permanent hardware, such as heated seats, advanced driver-assist and premium navigation, are increasingly locked behind subscriptions or pay-per-use models. That means what you buy may be less capable than what you thought you bought, unless you keep paying indefinitely.

Second is the loss of control over data. Modern cars collect massive amounts of information, and AI is used to process and monetise it often without meaningful consent or transparency.

Who owns that data – the driver, dealer or manufacturer – is far from clear. For consumers, that means giving up privacy in exchange for convenience often without realising the trade.

Restricted choice is the third issue. By embedding AI-driven diagnostics and feature activation

into systems, manufacturers can funnel customers back into their own service channels.

Independent workshops may be shut out or forced to pay steep licensing fees to access information needed to repair or maintain cars. Consumers end up with fewer options and higher costs.

Then there's manipulated demand. Just as targeted adverts shape what we buy online, AI in vehicles will increasingly shape how we view them.

Predictive analytics will prompt you to upgrade earlier, warning your car is "falling behind".

Personalised offers will encourage new features or packages, blurring the line between service and sales pitch. The goal isn't simply to meet demand, but manufacture it.

I remain a champion of AI. In medicine, logistics and energy systems, it's helping solve problems and unlock efficiencies that would have been impossible a decade ago.

But in the automotive sector, I question the balance of benefits and risks.

We didn't get the world of safe, efficient, autonomous vehicles once promised. Instead, we're getting a planet where AI is deployed to maximise shareholder value often at the expense of consumer choice, cost and privacy.

The irony is stark. AI was meant to take the wheel. Rather, it has taken the driver's seat in another sense by directing not the car, but the customer. Unless we're careful that may prove just as disruptive and costly as the driverless future that never arrived. ☹



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Rivals plug in for sales battle

Munich's car show, now officially known as IAA Mobility, had Europe's legacy marques defending their patches as more Chinese competitors than ever turned up to court consumers.

Unlike 2023, when BYD launched six models for the continent and German companies had little to shout about, this year the likes of BMW and Volkswagen touted new products.

The show came after Chinese brands almost doubled their share of European sales to 4.8 per cent in 2025's first seven months compared to the same period in 2024. Some market commentators predict they could hit 20 per cent within a decade.

In many ways, last month's event in Bavaria's capital saw the gloves come off between the host country and the incoming sales juggernaut.

DEBUTANT IN ITS CLASS

The BMW Group launched its iX3 in Munich. The company says it represents a milestone in its "transformation" and plays a key role in its future direction.

That's because the all-electric sports activity vehicle spearheads



The iX3 – BMW's debut Neue Klasse model



the arrival of its Neue Klasse, which translates as "new class", and advances in design and electrification.

The iX3 integrates sixth-generation eDrive technology, offers a range of up to 805km on the WLTP, 400kW charging and BMW Panoramic iDrive.

It has four "super-brain" high-performance computers covering on-road dynamics, automated driving, infotainment and comfort-enhancing functions.

"The Neue Klasse is our biggest future-focused project," says Oliver Zipse, who chairs BMW's management board. "It marks a huge leap forward. Our whole range will benefit from the innovations brought

by it, whichever drive system is employed."

Production of the new model starts in Hungary later this year for certain markets, while vehicles bound for down under will exit factories early next year.

The 2026 iX3 50 xDrive has a dual-motor configuration. It produces 345kW of power and 645Nm of torque for a 0-100kph time of 4.9 seconds and a top speed of 210kph.

Its high-voltage battery, which features cylindrical cells and 800-volt technology, has a usable energy content of 108kWh.

MARQUE'S FRESH 'FACE'

After its reveal in Milan, Audi showed off its Concept C. The electric two-seater previews the fourth-generation TT slated for 2027 and a design language called "radical simplicity".

The production version will not just be a halo model with chief executive officer Gernot Döllner saying "we'll make money out of it".

The production version's name has yet to be finalised. "TT is an option, but this car is bigger and could have another name," he adds, with global sales forecast to be in the "very low five-digit" range.

Audi's new "face" features a vertical frame with a lighting signature composed of four horizontally arranged elements in each headlight and rear light. It's been inspired by the Auto Union Type C from 1936 and 2004's third-generation A6.

For the first time, the marque is using an electrically retractable hardtop on a roadster. This feature is set to be offered on the next-generation TT.

Audi used canvas tops on the three iterations of TTs introduced since 1998. The next one will be offered only as a roadster with the retractable hardtop, and will have fully electric and internal combustion engine-based drivetrains.

The marque produced 662,762 TTs between 1998 and 2023. The final edition released in 2023 marked the end of the line because of falling segment sales.

MEET 'PERFECT FLAGSHIP'

The Polestar 5, which is a four-door GT, was launched at IAA Mobility.

An in-house developed electric rear motor contributes up to 450kW and 660Nm to the Performance's 650kW and 1,015Nm total output, which allows it to accelerate from 0-100kph in 3.2 seconds.

The 550kW Polestar 5 Dual motor makes the same sprint in 3.9 seconds. Both are electronically limited to 250kph.

The 800-volt electrical architecture – the first of its kind in a model released by the Swedish brand – helps to achieve those numbers and allows the EV to be charged at up to 350kW.

The 10-80 per cent benchmark can take as little as 22 minutes and an external indicator on the c-pillar gives a first glance indication of the ▶

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Leapmotor's B05 and B10, above right

battery's state of charge. The rear motor can be disconnected for increased efficiency.

As for ranges, the Polestar 5 Dual can achieve up to 670km on the WLTP on a single charge and the Performance can hit 565km.

Michael Lohscheller, chief executive officer, says: "With its Scandinavian design, unique platform, powerful motors, sophisticated chassis, cutting-edge technology and sustainable materials, the Polestar 5 is our perfect flagship."

WORLDWIDE EXPANSION

Leapmotor made an impression with the world premiere of its B05 hatchback and B10 SUV.

The sporty B05's silhouette is inspired by the marque's "tech-nature aesthetic" with innovations including frameless doors and 19-inch "swift-wing" alloys.

With a shoulder width of 1,880mm, the broadest in its c-segment, the EV offers a bold stance and spacious comfort.

The B10, meanwhile, is a long-range electric SUV, which "underscores" Leapmotor's long-term strategy for global expansion with Europe at the heart of its ambitions.

Deliveries started simultaneously with its launch in Munich. It will be available in more than 30 countries and regions including Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia-Pacific and South America.

Built on the latest Leap3.5 architecture, the B10 sets a benchmark for "intelligent" electric SUVs by offering advanced connectivity. It has a starting price

of €29,900 or around NZ\$59,200.

The EV features a 14.6-inch 2.5K floating touchscreen powered by Snapdragon's 8155 chip, and a "fluid navigation experience" with the introduction of Apple CarPlay and Android Auto via over-the-air software updates.

The latest LeapOS 4.0 Plus system provides a customisable interface, 3D cockpit and multi-application display, including smart features such as multi-scenario modes and full remote control via the marque's mobile app.

The B10 comes with two battery options – the Pro version with a 56.2kWh pack offering up to 361km of WLTP range, and the ProMax with a 67.1kWh pack for 434km.

The EV is available in two trims. The Life version has a standard 1.8sqm panoramic roof glass with electric sunshade, 18-inch alloys, 360-degree parking camera and a complete ADAS package.

The Design trim adds eco

leather seats, ambient lighting, heated, ventilated and electrically adjustable front seats, and other extra features.

FOUR FOR THE FUTURE

Volkswagen has presented the results of three years' development work that signals its new direction.

It has honed in on design with recognition factor, an attractive price-performance ratio, intuitive operating concepts and next-level technologies.

The result is a range that, for the most part, is made up of new vehicles that were displayed for the first time at IAA Mobility.

It also launched its new naming strategy with the ID.Polo first off the blocks to reflect an approach whereby established nameplates will essentially be transferred to VW's EVs.

Future models include four electric vehicles in the small and compact segments, which will be gradually launched from 2026.

In addition to the ID.Polo and its GTI sibling, the wraps came off



Audi's Concept C



The Polestar 5



VW's ID.Cross Concept



Hyundai's Concept Three

the new ID.Cross Concept, which is a near-production-ready compact SUV. The entry-level ID.Every1, priced at €20,000 or about NZ\$39,600, rounds off the range of future small EVs.

The group intends to invest about €1 billion into expanding its use of artificial intelligence by 2030.

The focus is on AI-supported vehicle development, industrial applications and high-performance IT infrastructures. The goal is to make cars and innovations available to customers faster.

THREE MARKS FIRST

Hyundai unveiled the Concept Three, its first compact EV under the Ioniq sub-brand, in Munich.

Representing the next step in its electrification journey, it signals its expansion into a new category by complementing its existing midsize and large electric models.

Xavier Martinet, president and CEO of Hyundai Motor Europe, says: "With its compact dimensions and Art Of Steel design language, the Concept Three embodies our vision of delivering mobility that's practical and accessible."

Art Of Steel transforms the strength and flexibility of steel into a "language of sculptural beauty".

The body creates enveloping forms using three main surfaces while intersecting lines add visual tension. The aerodynamic hatch profile delivers efficiency and a distinctive roofline combined with a vertical tailgate, while parametric pixel lighting is featured on the front and rear.

The Concept Three's exterior has an anodised-effect finish. Lemon-tinted glass and matching wheels forge links between inside and out, while the cabin is defined by soft yellow and grey tones.

Hyundai's line-up at IAA Mobility included the Kona Electric, Ioniq5, 6 and 9, Inster Cross and Insteroid. ☺

Kiwi dominates road courses

Shane van Gisbergen has come a long way in the tough and competitive arena of world motorsport.

From finishing a frustrating second in the 2007 Castrol Toyota Racing Series (TRS) in New Zealand to dominating the 2021 NZ Grand Prix.

From winning races and titles in the V8 Supercars Championship across the Tasman to becoming the pacesetter on road circuits in America's Nascar series, the Kiwi has been in the seat to secure wins everywhere he has raced.

Along the way, Van Gisbergen has gained a reputation for speaking his mind, and it's fair to say that has ruffled a few feathers on and off the track.

In the US, social media explodes with complaints when he – yet again – wins on a road course. It leads to calls for change proliferating as well as protestations that the racing is boring becoming rife.

The 36-year-old sees and hears the “white noise” from traditionalists who want their old-school heroes back on the top step of the podium.

“Yeah, I get a bit of that, but I try to live on the positive side,” he explains. “There’s no doubt we’ve had an amazing run on the road courses.

“People saying it’s boring? Boring is good if you’re winning. We’re now setting the benchmark on the road tracks and it’s about the whole package. That’s the car, engineers, team, guys in pit lane and not just me.”

From being the “new kid” who scored unexpected victories, Van Gisbergen has become the expected frontrunner on road courses, which does place pressure on him and his team.

“We just keep working on it and we change strategies halfway through a race. There’s been some really good fast guys on these courses, but we just seem to be able to put the package together.”

Van Gisbergen credits the whole



Shane van Gisbergen celebrates claiming a chequered flag with his trademark burn-out

Trackhouse team with delivering him a race-winning vehicle and the strategy that gets him onto the podium.

“It’s great we just keep executing. Not just me, but the guys doing the set-up, the engineers and how the car is prepared for different courses. Then there’s the race-day strategy with the pit crew performing perfectly. It all has to come together.”

The Trackhouse team has produced some “excellent” vehicles, “so the cars make it look easy, which it never is”.

In 2024, Van Gisbergen was mainly running in the Nascar Xfinity Series where the vehicles are built and set up differently. This championship has fewer race dates, which the New Zealander highlights as making it hard to adjust between circuits.

Racing in the main Nascar Cup Series on a full-time basis in 2025 appears to have brought out the best in him though.

“This year we’re just developing and getting better from week to week on the ovals as well as road tracks.”

The traditional ovals have provided a huge challenge for Van Gisbergen as they are for any racer



PLAY-OFFS BID ENDS

Van Gisbergen has bailed out of the Nascar Cup play-offs in round 16. His 28th placing on September 14 in the 500-lap night race at Bristol Motor Speedway, Tennessee, means he was one of four to be cut in the first stage of the 2025 play-offs.

The remaining 12

drivers will now contest three more races before the field is whittled down to eight for the semi-final round.

Van Gisbergen started 14th out of the 16 play-off contenders – 15 points under the cut-off. He ended up 15th and 16 points behind.

He started 28th but finished stage one in 29th before ending stage two in 34th. A spin on lap 238 didn’t help his cause and he ultimately finished 28th, four laps down.

With all Nascar Cup race winners gaining automatic entry into the top 16 play-offs, Van Gisbergen qualified through his four road-course victories at Mexico City, Chicago, Sonoma Raceway and Watkins Glen.

While the focus is on the play-off drivers in the post-season, all of the field still lines up on the grid for the remaining races. ☺

He autographs and kicks a rugby ball into the stands. In 2025, he’s gone through five balls across his outings in the Xfinity Series and Nascar Cup.

'Character building' first season

Louis Sharp's first FIA Formula 3 Championship season has come to a frustrating end with an engine issue during the concluding round.

The New Zealander entered F3 this year full of confidence after back-to-back title wins in GB3 and British F4.

Pre-season testing saw him consistently feature among the front-runners. Despite that, his season fell short of expectations.

"I certainly had higher hopes going into the year," says Sharp. "Off the back of my past two seasons, I wanted to be at the front fighting for podiums and wins.

"Winning the championship as a rookie was always going to be a big ask. But I expected to be consistently challenging for points and perhaps podiums when opportunities presented themselves."



Louis Sharp in car number 24

The F3 championship is only two levels below F1, and the 17-year-old was racing against 29 of the world's best young drivers, many with multiple years of experience, at circuits entirely new to him.

Sharp showed his potential with two top 10s on debut on the notoriously unforgiving streets of Monaco, an impressive fourth at Imola and a remarkable recovery

drive in Hungary on a circuit that's renowned for limited overtaking opportunities.

His results helped Rodin Motorsport achieve its best-ever finish in the teams' championship by placing sixth overall after the season's finale in Monza.

Ultimately though, 2025 was "character building" for Sharp and a crucial step in his career development.

"It's been a tricky year, but I've definitely learned a lot," he says. "I knew F3 would be tough, but probably not quite as tough as it has been.

"Still, I've discovered so much about myself, my driving and things I wouldn't have learned if I had been out front winning. I've had to dig deep and that will serve me well going forward.

"It has also been fantastic to learn the circuits. That's another huge positive for the future as well as gaining experience with the Pirelli tyres.

"They behave very differently to the more robust ones that I raced on in the UK, but are similar in character to those used in F2 and F1."

Currently with Rodin Motorsport, Sharp is tipped to move to multiple champions Prema Racing for 2026. 🍀

Hunt holds off Stokes

Defending national champion Ben Hunt is fast closing in on this year's Brian Green Property Group New Zealand Rally (NZRC) title.

He claimed his third victory of the series by taking out the Dayle ITM Goldrush Rally Coromandel.

Hunt secured the win in the NZRC's return to the Whitianga-based event by 10.4 seconds over fellow title contender Robbie Stokes.

Jack Stokes finished third for a second successive podium in his Team Hutchison Ford Fiesta AP4.

Hunt and Stokes traded times

on the first day, but the three-time national champion did enough to protect an advantage he claimed on the opening stage. In doing so, his series lead over Stokes stood at 11 points with two rounds remaining.

Bryn Jones continued his dominant campaign by taking victory in the NZRC two-wheel-drive (2WD) class over Tim Mackersy – both in identical Ford Fiesta Rally 4s – by 23.8 seconds.

Deane Buist maintained his dominance in the historic 2WD class to claim a fourth consecutive round driving his Ford Escort.

Stephen Gill was a comfortable



Ben Hunt tackling the Coromandel's gravel. Photo: Geoff Ridder

second despite a clutch issue while Pat Norris finished third.

Haydn Mackenzie relished a move to the Toyota GR Yaris Proto and a change of classes to take out the rally challenge 4WD battle.

Vanuatu driver Julien Lenglet in his Subaru Impreza came second in this class while Andy Martin driving

his Subaru WRX pipped Gavin Feast for the final podium spot.

Meanwhile, Robbie Stokes won the Mainland Rally Championship title on September 27. He and co-driver Matt Summerfield were first home in all seven special stages of the Sadlers Garage Hamner Memorial Rally. 🍀



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Buyer provided insufficient evidence to back case and left it too long to file it post-supply

Background

Brian Coddington bought a 2020 Peugeot 3008 with 13,000km on its odometer for \$36,000 on November 23, 2022.

He claimed it had issues with its multimedia system, and the windows and tailgate randomly opened. Although he had given two companies “ample” time, they had been unable to fix them so he wanted a refund.

The vehicle was bought from Premier Motors. Ebbett Waikato was a Peugeot distributor and helped Coddington before his application was filed.

At hearing, it was stated the claim was against Premier Motors. As such, the latter was joined as a party and proceedings against Ebbett Waikato were dismissed.

Under schedule one of the Motor Vehicle Sales Act, a party can be joined to an existing matter if the tribunal is satisfied it has sufficient connection to the case for it to be determined effectively and completely.

The case

Coddington’s concerns about faults were followed up with service visits at no charge.

Premier Motors, trading as Duncan & Ebbett, inspected the car on January 23, 2023, because it overheated. It replaced the water pump.

Four days later, the Android Auto functionality was checked because it could drop out when used, but no fault was found.

On September 19, 2023, the car was serviced by Premier Motors, and its map and audio systems were checked.

An issue with its windows and tailgate was also logged with Coddington being told to monitor them because no faults could be found. The odometer was on 26,167km.

The dealer also noted multimedia issues. Coddington said these included “a reluctance to start,



A model-year 2020 Peugeot 3008

confused map, backing camera not starting when reverse is selected and when eco mode is selected the audio system shuts down”.

A map update was completed, the battery checked and nothing else wrong could be found, and on October 10 the water pump was replaced by Premier Motors as part of a recall.

After this, Coddington started taking the car to Ebbett Waikato because it was an authorised Peugeot distributor.

Between May 6 and 10, 2024, issues with the audio system were investigated and the battery was replaced. The invoice noted Coddington was adamant he wouldn’t pay because Premier Motors had the vehicle “multiple times for this fault”.

From June 24 to July 5, the car keys were reprogrammed. The BSI software was updated, and the module was to be replaced if windows and tailgate faults persisted. The BSI and key were swapped out on October 16.

Ebbett Waikato had the car between October and December for testing. In that time, the windows and tailgate didn’t fault.

Coddington filed his application on April 30, 2025, originally only against Ebbett Waikato, but the latter referred it to Premier Motors.

It was at this time Premier Motors became aware the claimed issues with the windows and tailgate continued after September 2023’s service.

Its position was it hadn’t since

had a chance to repair the car, and any fault was intermittent and hard to diagnose.

In an email to the tribunal dated May 20 this year, Premier Motors said: “The vehicle has been with [Ebbett Waikato] for inspection. They have been unable to replicate the fault”.

Two Ebbett Waikato employees provided information about tests carried out. Before and after parts were replaced, no faults were stored in the vehicle’s memory.

In an email to the tribunal on May 27, Premier Motors stated it needed to be able to fault the car to repair it.

Coddington collected the Peugeot on June 5 after the comfort window-opening function had been deactivated.

On June 13, Premier Motors told Coddington it tested the car multiple times over a few weeks, checked it daily and found no problems.

At the hearing, Coddington said the windows and tailgate hadn’t faulted since, but he wasn’t confident they had been fixed.

He added the multimedia system’s errors were initially fixed when the battery was swapped, but reappeared. He provided no evidence to support that and didn’t raise it again with Premier Motors or Ebbett Waikato before lodging his application.

The finding

The tribunal had inadequate evidence regarding any issues with

The case: The consumer wanted a \$36,000 refund for his car because of problems with its multimedia system, tailgate and windows. He claimed the supplier had enough time to fix the issues, but had failed to do so.

The decision: The application, which was made under the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA), was dismissed. The adjudicator said the buyer had provided insufficient evidence to support his claim, which was submitted too long after he had purchased the Peugeot 3008.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal, Auckland, by audio-visual link.

the car that Coddington said it had.

The claim about the multimedia system was raised late in the application. No supporting evidence was provided.

While Coddington was found to be a reliable witness, the information before the adjudicator wasn’t sufficient to justify the significant remedy he sought.

The faults, if they existed, appeared to be intermittent and difficult to diagnose, and the tribunal was unable to rule if they breached the CGA’s guarantee of acceptable quality.

Even if that had been the case, the adjudicator couldn’t have ordered the vehicle’s return because Premier Motors didn’t have enough time to remedy any problem and Coddington had taken too long to reject it.

It was relevant that Premier Motors and Ebbett Waikato were separate entities.

From May 2024 to April 2025 when the application was filed, only Ebbett Waikato was aware of any issues. It couldn’t be said Premier Motors refused, failed or didn’t succeed in remedying faults during that period.

Coddington first reported the windows and tailgate in September 2023, but didn’t seek to reject the car until April 2025.

Order

The case was dismissed. ☹

Case highlights important considerations to make when opting out of law's provisions

Background

Eme Solar Ltd (ESL) bought a 2017 Porsche Macan GTS from Project J Auto (PJA) on September 3 last year for \$56,000 after it had been driven 75,500km.

The vehicle offer and sale agreement (VOSA) had standard provisions for opting out of the CGA. Alex Fuss, ESL's director, had signed it.

By April this year, ESL had carried out repairs before other faults needed fixing. It claimed costs for all work.

The case

Fuss signed the VOSA and its part that stated: "The purchaser acknowledges and certifies the goods are being supplied and acquired in-trade. Accordingly, the parties agree the CGA will not apply."

Since taking possession, Fuss had driven the car for 17,336km with business use accounting for about 80 per cent.

ESL's first repair was replacing the brake rotors in March 2025 during a service. It wasn't brought to PJA's attention and cost \$1,819.

Around this time, the PDSL+ warning light came on. Shortly afterwards, the left-window control on the driver's side panel stopped working and a suspension-warning light appeared.

Milford Auto Electrical replaced the suspension airbag compressor but a leak was detected in the left-front suspension strut. This was also swapped out and was the likely cause of the compressor failing. These repairs cost \$5,782. PJA was unaware work was needed.

The trader's first contact from Fuss was a text message sent on April 17 in which he asked James Yan, director of PJA, about a replacement part for the window control.

He mentioned no other matters and didn't until April 30 when he texted Yan after spending \$2,000 replacing the front rotor and

\$4,000 because the compressor stopped working. The buyer also told Yan about the possible suspension leak, but that had been remedied.

Between April 30 and May 6, Fuss texted PJA asking it to contribute to costs incurred and outstanding jobs.

ESL filed its application on May 8. After that, there was a malfunction with the auto-lane assist. The tribunal directed Fuss to have the issues assessed.

The Giltrap Motor Group estimated \$1,457 to fix the window control. The problems with the PDSL+ system and auto-lane assist had the same root cause. The windscreen was after-market and needed to be replaced with a genuine part for \$5,806.

The finding

Section 43 of the CGA states an agreement between parties may allow for provisions in the act to not apply if goods are supplied in-trade.

In addition, all parties must be in-trade, agree to contract out, and it must be fair and reasonable that they are bound by that. A court must consider all the agreement's circumstances, including its subject matter and the goods' value.

The parties' bargaining powers must be taken into account, including the extent to which they were able to negotiate the terms, if one was required to accept or reject conditions as presented and if anyone was advised by a lawyer.

The tribunal decided PJA supplied the car in-trade, but it was more complex if ESL acquired it in that way.

While the extent the car was intended for personal use was relevant, it was bought for Fuss' sole use on company business.

All circumstances of the contract, including factors in section 43(3) of the CGA, had to be considered.

The Porsche was a model normally bought by consumers and was acquired so Fuss could use it for work and personal affairs. He bought this type of vehicle because he wanted it, not because he needed it for business reasons.

While the adjudicator expected ESL was accounting for it as a depreciating asset and on its expenses, it was doubtful any company that wasn't owned and run by one person would spend \$56,000 on a car for an employee to use.

Yan explained the VOSA used was produced for dealers. There were no significant talks about its terms and no suggestion standard terms were negotiable.

The parties took no legal advice on contracting out and Fuss referred to himself as the purchaser.

Having found buying and using the Porsche was incidental to the wish to have such a car, the adjudicator found no reasons why the CGA shouldn't apply.

It was ruled unfair and unreasonable for the parties to be bound by the VOSA to contract out of the act.

While a reasonable buyer of an older vehicle would expect to maintain and replace parts, this car was only seven years old when supplied and its mileage wasn't excessive.

A 2017 Porsche Macan GTS



The case: The buyer claimed costs for repairs to his Porsche. However, the trader cited a clause in the sales document opting out of the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA) because the car had been supplied "in-trade".

The decision: The tribunal ruled it "unfair and unreasonable" for the parties to be bound by the contracting-out provision. The dealer was ordered to remedy some faults, but didn't have to pay for problems the buyer hadn't made it aware of.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal, Auckland, by audio-visual conference.

It also had a relatively high purchase price. In those circumstances, reasonable expectations of it would be equally high.

ESL was unable to recover costs incurred before April 30.

The CGA states only once a supplier has been asked to fix a failure, and hasn't done so in a reasonable time, may a buyer have work done by another party and get back costs.

However, the suspension and compressor needed repairing. These faults were unlikely to have appeared suddenly.

Whether or not the same could be said of the window control was unknown, but the tribunal wasn't satisfied this car was reasonably free of minor defects and sufficiently durable when supplied.

Order

PJA had to fix the cause of the PDSL+ warning light, lane-keep assist and window control. ☺

Armstrong's nails 'dream' deal

Dongfeng has appointed Armstrong's as its exclusive distributor for New Zealand with retail stores in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch to be followed by more branches across the country.

The marque is promising to "challenge convention" and leverage its global scale and technologies to help consumers switch into advanced zero and low-emissions models at "more affordable" prices.

It is set launch here in 2025's final quarter, and its initial line-up will include three electric cars – the Box, Vigo and 007.

"We're incredibly excited to bring Dongfeng to New Zealand," says Rick Armstrong, founder and executive director of Armstrong's.

"These vehicles combine world-class engineering with cutting-edge technology at price points that make premium quality more accessible. We're all about removing barriers and delivering vehicles that are a dream to drive."

Simon Rutherford is chief executive of Armstrong's Distribution Ltd, which will oversee the rollout of Dongfeng on our shores.

He says: "Our goal is to challenge and exceed expectations, and we're confident Dongfeng offers qualities and attributes that motorists demand."

"It's a future-focused and progressive marque which fulfils what Kiwis have been dreaming about driving – attractive, attainable vehicles designed to revolutionise the way New



Dongfeng's initial line-up for New Zealand includes the Vigo, Box, right, and 007, bottom



Zealanders experience next-generation mobility."

While new to this country, Dongfeng is one of the "big four" Chinese carmakers with 42 factories worldwide, many of which are joint ventures with international OEMs. In 2024, it sold more than 2.5 million units across 100 countries.

Established 56 years ago, the marque prides itself on advancing technology and innovation, and plans to invest more than US\$14 billion – or about NZ\$24b – in research and development by 2028. It focuses on new-energy vehicles, which will form a cornerstone of its expansion.

"We are honoured to partner with Armstrong's to bring in Dongfeng products," says Zhu Xun, Dongfeng's general manager of passenger-vehicle sales and marketing in south-east Asia.

"As one of the largest automotive groups in New Zealand, Armstrong's was a natural choice. We look forward to long and successful co-operation. New Zealand is important for us as we expand to more right-hand-drive overseas markets."

The Box, a four-door hatchback, boasts the only



Rick Armstrong



Zhu Xun



Simon Rutherford

frameless doors and 540-degree surround-view system in its class, as well as the industry's first Mach E 10-in-one electric-drive assembly.

It has a WLTP range of 317km, battery capacity of 43kW and a 30-80 per cent DC fast-charging time of 30 minutes. It should be here in November, according to Dongfeng's New Zealand website.

The 007 is a sedan powered by a 70kW battery, has a WLTP range of 520km and takes 26 minutes to charge to the same levels stated in the Box's specifications.

The Vigo, a compact SUV, has a 51kW battery, 340km range and takes 18 minutes to get from 30-80 per cent capacity. The 007 and Vigo are slated to arrive here in 2026. Further details on specifications, safety features and after-sales support will be released later in October. ☺



Pact cuts tariffs

The US has agreed to cut tariffs on cars imported from Japan from 27.5 to 15 per cent, easing uncertainty for the likes of Toyota, Mitsubishi, Nissan and Honda.

In return, Tokyo has agreed to invest about NZ\$945 billion in projects in the States and gradually open its economy to American goods, including cars and rice, according to the White House.

The agreement follows months of talks between the two countries in the wake of President Donald Trump announcing tariffs on many countries in April.

According to his executive order, the deal will help reduce the US' trade deficit with Japan and provide American businesses with "breakthrough openings".

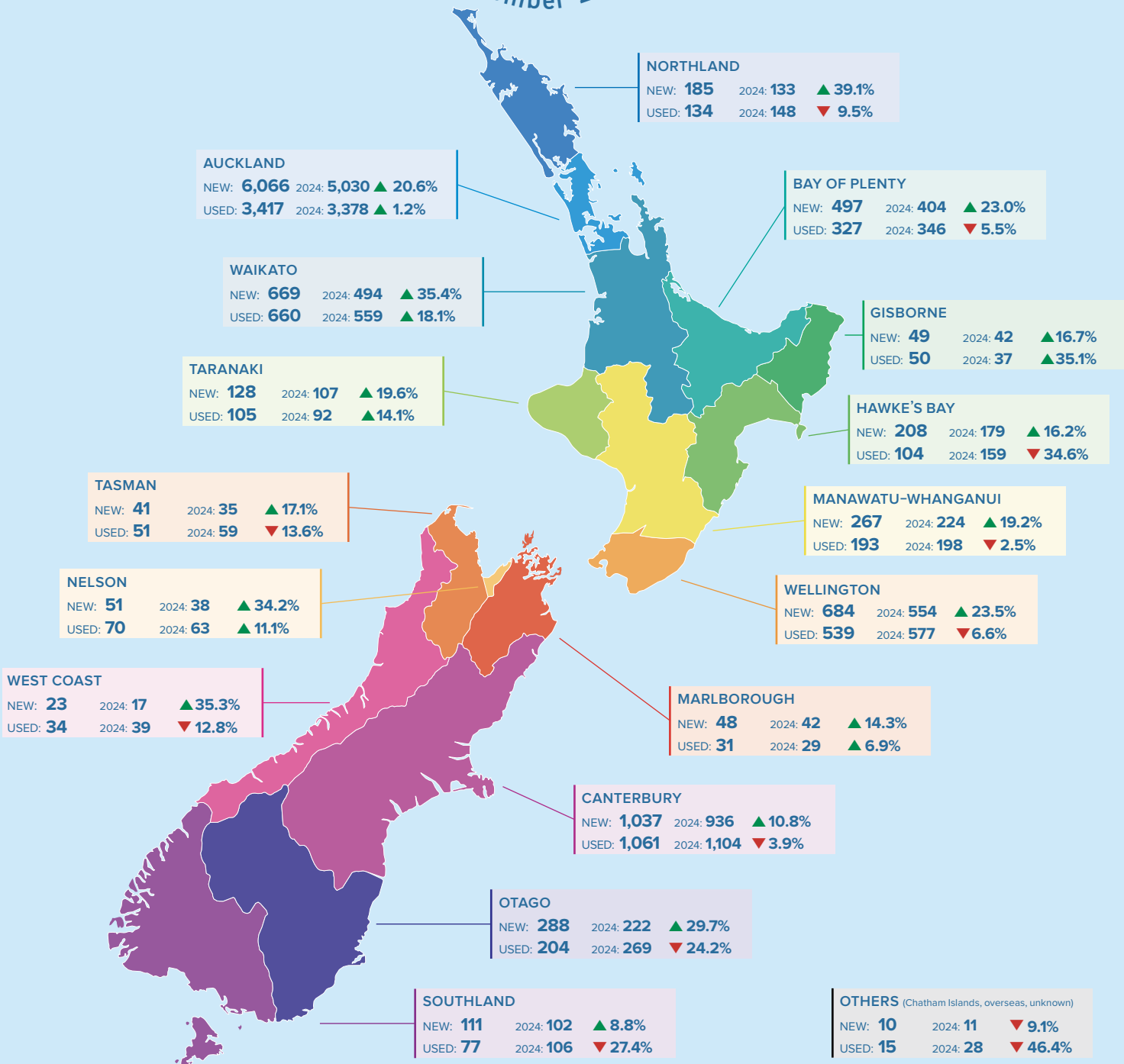
Japan's economy is reliant on selling goods abroad and the US is its biggest export market. Cars account for about one-fifth of the country's total exports.

Shares in Japanese carmakers and automotive parts suppliers jumped on September 5 in Tokyo after Trump signed the executive order. ☺

AROUND THE COUNTRY
September 2025

Total new cars
10,362
2024: 8,570 ▲ 20.9%

Total imported used cars
7,072
2024: 7,191 ▼ 1.7%



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Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - September 2025

MAKE	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/-%	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	2,678	2,569	4.2%	37.9%	23,971	37.1%
Mazda	1,050	985	6.6%	14.8%	8,817	13.7%
Nissan	963	971	-0.8%	13.6%	9,004	13.9%
Honda	634	615	3.1%	9.0%	6,026	9.3%
Subaru	540	698	-22.6%	7.6%	5,596	8.7%
BMW	232	226	2.7%	3.3%	2,293	3.6%
Suzuki	175	187	-6.4%	2.5%	1,671	2.6%
Lexus	144	123	17.1%	2.0%	1,006	1.6%
Mercedes-Benz	124	161	-23.0%	1.8%	1,325	2.1%
Audi	117	129	-9.3%	1.7%	1,121	1.7%
Mitsubishi	116	173	-32.9%	1.6%	1,096	1.7%
Volkswagen	89	138	-35.5%	1.3%	783	1.2%
Land Rover	42	36	16.7%	0.6%	365	0.6%
Mini	22	10	120.0%	0.3%	131	0.2%
Jaguar	21	20	5.0%	0.3%	161	0.2%
Ford	19	32	-40.6%	0.3%	181	0.3%
Jeep	17	14	21.4%	0.2%	102	0.2%
Volvo	16	6	166.7%	0.2%	135	0.2%
Tesla	12	10	20.0%	0.2%	127	0.2%
Porsche	11	9	22.2%	0.2%	98	0.2%
Chevrolet	6	11	-45.5%	0.1%	76	0.1%
Hyundai	5	1	400.0%	0.1%	46	0.1%
Peugeot	4	5	-20.0%	0.1%	22	0.0%
Dodge	4	6	-33.3%	0.1%	38	0.1%
Kia	3	2	50.0%	0.0%	22	0.0%
Skoda	2	0	200.0%	0.0%	5	0.0%
LDV	2	0	200.0%	0.0%	4	0.0%
Haval	2	0	200.0%	0.0%	8	0.0%
Daihatsu	2	3	-33.3%	0.0%	35	0.1%
Chrysler Jeep	2	2	0.0%	0.0%	6	0.0%
Chrysler	2	10	-80.0%	0.0%	34	0.1%
Alfa Romeo	2	2	0.0%	0.0%	11	0.0%
TVR	1	0	100.0%	0.0%	3	0.0%
Smart	1	2	-50.0%	0.0%	6	0.0%
Renault	1	0	100.0%	0.0%	16	0.0%
Others	11	35	-68.6%	0.2%	205	0.3%
Total	7,072	7,191	-1.7%	100.0%	64,546	100.0%

Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - September 2025

MAKE	MODEL	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/-%	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Aqua	756	750	0.8%	10.7%	6,732	10.4%
Toyota	Prius	477	522	-8.6%	6.7%	4,673	7.2%
Toyota	Corolla	391	258	51.6%	5.5%	3,226	5.0%
Nissan	Note	337	202	66.8%	4.8%	2,704	4.2%
Mazda	Axela	280	254	10.2%	4.0%	2,594	4.0%
Honda	Fit	270	210	28.6%	3.8%	2,556	4.0%
Toyota	C-HR	242	199	21.6%	3.4%	2,163	3.4%
Mazda	CX-5	211	197	7.1%	3.0%	1,588	2.5%
Subaru	Impreza	203	244	-16.8%	2.9%	2,075	3.2%
Mazda	Demio	189	221	-14.5%	2.7%	1,679	2.6%
Nissan	X-Trail	174	259	-32.8%	2.5%	1,794	2.8%
Nissan	Serena	159	209	-23.9%	2.2%	1,404	2.2%
Subaru	XV	151	158	-4.4%	2.1%	1,606	2.5%
Honda	Vezele	132	110	20.0%	1.9%	1,212	1.9%
Suzuki	Swift	127	128	-0.8%	1.8%	1,196	1.9%
Nissan	Leaf	110	54	103.7%	1.6%	1,034	1.6%
Toyota	Yaris	90	17	429.4%	1.3%	504	0.8%
Toyota	Vellfire	84	91	-7.7%	1.2%	670	1.0%
Mazda	Atenza	79	104	-24.0%	1.1%	618	1.0%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	76	112	-32.1%	1.1%	684	1.1%
Toyota	Camry	70	75	-6.7%	1.0%	585	0.9%
Toyota	Alphard	64	49	30.6%	0.9%	449	0.7%
Mazda	Premacy	57	105	-45.7%	0.8%	601	0.9%
Toyota	Vitz	54	76	-28.9%	0.8%	678	1.1%
Mazda	CX-3	53	28	89.3%	0.7%	398	0.6%
Volkswagen	Golf	51	91	-44.0%	0.7%	477	0.7%
Subaru	Legacy	48	88	-45.5%	0.7%	523	0.8%
Toyota	Sai	45	30	50.0%	0.6%	370	0.6%
BMW	Mini	45	31	45.2%	0.6%	400	0.6%
Lexus	CT 200h	42	43	-2.3%	0.6%	287	0.4%
Subaru	Forester	40	82	-51.2%	0.6%	387	0.6%
Toyota	Sienta	39	15	160.0%	0.6%	234	0.4%
Honda	Odyssey	39	59	-33.9%	0.6%	426	0.7%
Mazda	Mazda3	38	16	137.5%	0.5%	237	0.4%
Honda	Shuttle	37	37	0.0%	0.5%	328	0.5%
Others		1,812	2,067	-12.3%	25.6%	17,454	27.0%
Total		7,072	7,191	-1.7%	100.0%	64,546	100.0%



WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR VEHICLE SUPPLIER?

Home detention for \$400k scam

The ex-owner of a dealership has been given nine-and-a-half months' home detention and 200 hours of community work for breaking clean car discount (CCD) rules.

Hamish Ian Gardyne, who used to own Hamish's Vehicle Sales (HVS Motors), appeared in Dunedin District Court on September 9 after previously pleading guilty to using a document for a pecuniary advantage.

The charge had left the 36-year-old potentially facing a seven-year jail term.

Judge David Robinson, who rejected an application for a discharge without conviction in March, described Gardyne's bid to exploit the CCD as "out-and-out fraud".

The court heard he registered 119 Nissan Leafs in March 2023 and sought rebates totalling \$410,550. Gardyne only received one payment of \$3,450, which he repaid in September 2023.

Applications for CCD rebates had to be made for each car and he withdrew all the others he lodged.

The NZTA has welcomed the outcome and notes the judge considered the seriousness of the offending and scale of the fraud.

Brett Aldridge, national manager of road-safety regulations, says the case sends a clear message to the wider industry that such behaviour is unacceptable and is a priority for the agency.

"It was the result of many months' meticulous work," he adds. "The scale of this fraud was significant."

"This sentence should send a strong warning to anyone considering fraudulent activity in the vehicle industry that the NZTA will investigate and prosecute when we find breaches."

CCD rebates could be claimed from April 2022 to December

Sales steady

The were 7,072 used-imported cars registered during September for a fall of 1.7 per cent compared to 7,191 in the same month of 2024. The year-to-date total is now 64,546.

Toyota was September's top brand with 2,678 units for a market share of 37.9 per cent, while its Aqua was the best-selling model on 756 and 10.7 per cent. The Prius was second on 477 and Corolla third with 391.

registered to themselves that were then used as company, courtesy or demonstration cars for at least three months.

Concerned about the number of claims for demonstrators from HVS Motors, the NZTA launched an investigation and found they were false. Gardyne had already sold and exported 90 of the EVs to Australia.

The agency recovered the one claim paid to him and he later withdrew his other 118 claims through his lawyer.

Gardyne's conviction means his vehicle-trading registration will be cancelled and he will be barred from such work for five years.

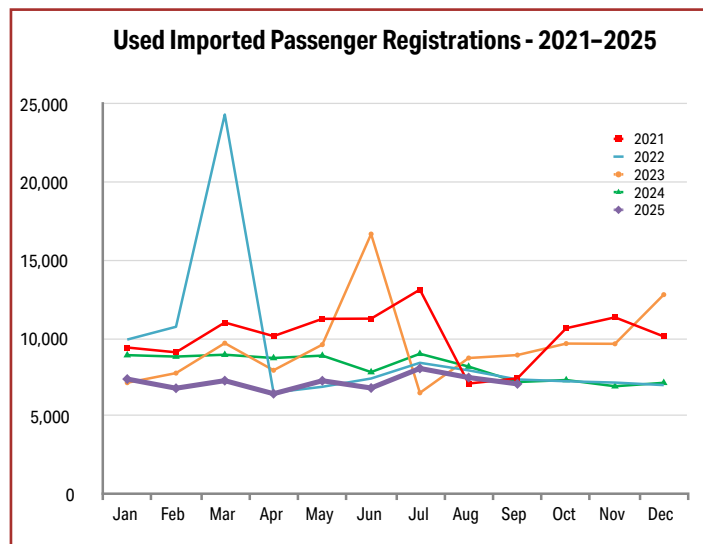
Autofile checked Hamish's Vehicle Sales' details on the NZ Companies Register on September 24. Kaye Heather Gardyne, of Gore, was listed as sole director. It also states Hamish Ian Gardyne, of Dunedin, ceased being a director on September 3. ☹

The scale of this fraud was significant

– Brett Aldridge, NZTA

2023 by owners of zero or low-emissions models after first registration in New Zealand.

Dealers were only allowed to seek rebates for vehicles



MAKE	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/- %	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	129	78	65.4%	1.8%	1,255	1.9%
Plug-in hybrid electric	57	76	-25.0%	0.8%	537	0.8%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	3,613	3,075	17.5%	51.1%	30,898	47.9%
Petrol	3,170	3,861	-17.9%	44.8%	30,932	47.9%
Diesel	103	101	2.0%	1.5%	923	1.4%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	7,072	7,191	-1.7%		64,546	

- ✓ SOLID COMPANY
- ✓ QUALITY VEHICLES
- ✓ CHOICE & VARIETY OF STOCK
- ✓ EXPERIENCED AGENTS
- ✓ DEALER ONLY SUPPLIER
- ✓ GREAT VALUE FOR MONEY



Man behind bars for illegal warrants

A man has been jailed for six months after breaching transport legislation.

Dwayne Lord fraudulently accessed the NZTA's system by using his employer's credentials despite not being an appointed vehicle inspector.

Over four separate occasions, he issued 78 warrants of fitness (WOFs) without inspecting most of the cars, Auckland District Court has heard.

The agency has welcomed the sentencing after its investigation uncovered deliberate abuse of the system and confirmed that few of the vehicles concerned had been

inspected by Lord or anyone else authorised to do so.

Brett Aldridge, the NZTA's national manager of road-safety regulations, describes the defendant's actions as a violation of public trust.

"New Zealanders rely on WOFs to identify actual, emerging and potentially dangerous faults," he says. "Fraudulent inspection records not only undermine the integrity of the system, they also pose a serious risk to the safety of road users."

The agency views this case as "blatant abuse" of the land-transport system, and a reminder

of how important maintaining strict oversight and accountability of certification is.

"This sentencing should send a clear message to the industry – anyone who attempts to manipulate or abuse the system should expect to be held accountable," adds Aldridge.

"The NZTA has robust monitoring and investigative capabilities, and will not hesitate to take action against individuals who compromise vehicle safety.

"At the same time, we acknowledge the vast majority of inspectors and industry professionals are doing an

excellent job by upholding high standards. Their commitment shouldn't be overshadowed by the actions of individuals."

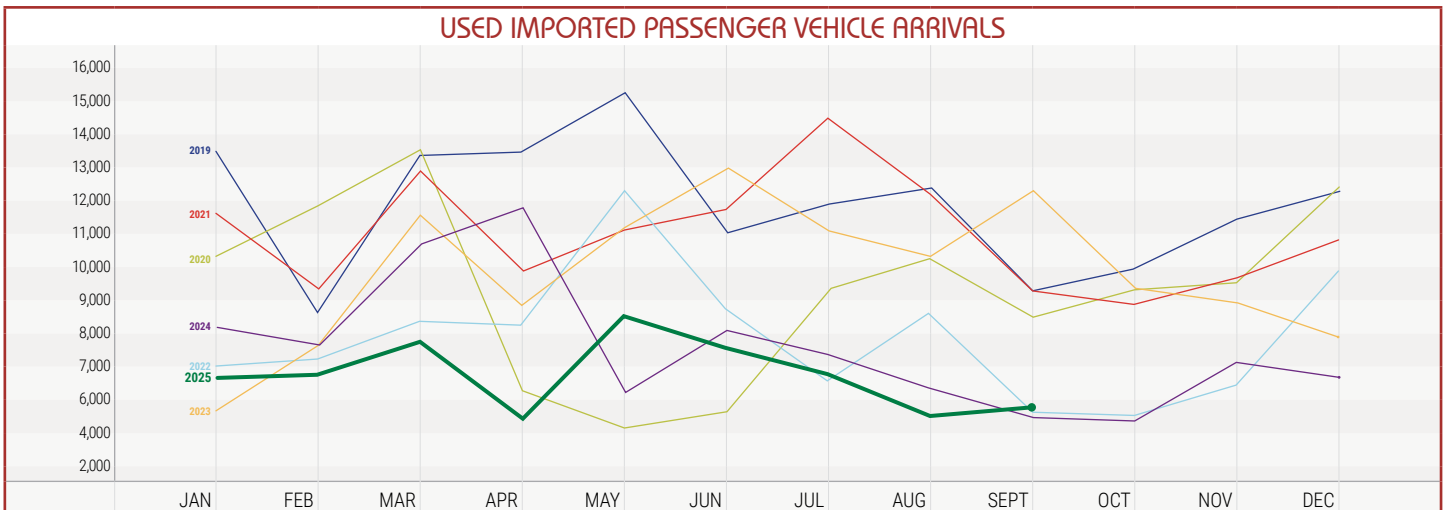
The NZTA's safer-vehicles team regularly reviews inspecting organisations and inspectors to check compliance.

YEARLY TOTAL NEARS 60,000

There were 5,670 used cars imported last month to bring the year-to-date aggregate to 59,693.

The total included 5,465 from Japan and 107 from Australia.

There were also 66 arrivals from the UK, 11 from Singapore and 10 from the US. 🌐



COUNTRY OF EXPORT	2025											2024		2023	
	JAN '25	FEB '25	MAR '25	APR '25	MAY '25	JUN '25	JUL '25	AUG '25	SEP '25	SEPT MKT SHARE %	2025 TOTAL	TOTAL	MKT SHARE	TOTAL	MKT SHARE
Australia	81	121	100	142	150	112	189	145	107	1.9%	1,147	1,285	1.5%	1,263	1.1%
Great Britain	14	25	23	12	3	13	14	16	66	1.2%	186	255	0.3%	272	0.2%
Japan	6,484	6,418	7,469	4,732	8,273	7,596	6,553	5,000	5,465	96.4%	57,990	86,040	97.5%	113,462	98.0%
Singapore	21	8	5	15	11	15	23	0	11	0.2%	109	256	0.3%	250	0.2%
USA	38	20	13	14	14	5	16	19	10	0.2%	149	249	0.3%	265	0.2%
Other countries	29	10	5	2	6	15	18	16	11	0.2%	112	170	0.2%	241	0.2%
Total	6,667	6,602	7,615	4,917	8,457	7,756	6,813	5,196	5,670	100.0%	59,693	88,255	100.0%	115,753	100.0%

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Relaunch for repairs service

My Auto Shop has been rebranded as Turners Servicing & Repairs, marking a step forward in its strategy to simplify what the company offers.

The decision follows Turners' acquisition of a 50 per cent stake in the business, well-known as a fast-growing digital platform for its mobile car servicing.

Richard Wafer, chief executive of Turners Servicing & Repairs, says: "We've found that busy Kiwis value the ease and convenience of having a mechanic come to them and have embraced this service.

"My Auto Shop has had more

than 3,800 Google reviews and achieved a 4.9 rating. This reflects the trust customers place in us and the level of service across a wide range of jobs.

"Having the Turners brand on the service will help us tell this story even better."

"This rebrand is about combining the innovation and convenience of mobile servicing with the scale and trust of Turners," adds Todd Hunter, group CEO.

"It's a win for customers who want great service without any of the hassle."

The Turners Servicing & Repairs business allows customers to book

a mechanic to go to their home or workplace with fixed upfront pricing via an online booking system. It has been designed for time-poor vehicle owners wanting to avoid the "inconvenience" of traditional workshops.

A targeted Tina From Turners advertising campaign in Auckland has been supporting the rebrand there on the back of plans to expand nationwide over the next 12 months.

"With over 3.5 million passenger vehicles in New Zealand at an average age of 15, our cars need plenty of love," says the business' website.

"But the typical experience of finding a mechanic you can trust, getting your car to the shop during your busy day, then worrying about the mystery of how much it will cost isn't fun, so we've fixed it."

TRADER DEALS UP

There were 16,875 second-hand cars sold by dealers to the public in September, which was up 9.4 per cent from 15,422 compared to the same month in 2024.

Trade-ins totalled 13,863 for a 12.4 per cent rise from 12,335 over the same timescale.

Private sales came in at 40,032, which was down by 1.6 per cent. 📉

SECONDHAND CAR SALES - September 2025

REGION	DEALER TO PUBLIC				PUBLIC TO PUBLIC			PUBLIC TO DEALER		
	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/- %	MARKET SHARE	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/- %	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/- %
Northland	536	517	3.7%	3.2%	1,901	1,798	5.7%	225	164	37.2%
Auckland	5,678	5,202	9.2%	33.6%	13,395	13,581	-1.4%	6,220	5,465	13.8%
Waikato	1,774	1,577	12.5%	10.5%	3,935	4,053	-2.9%	1,202	1,041	15.5%
Bay of Plenty	1,110	1,022	8.6%	6.6%	2,677	2,774	-3.5%	607	591	2.7%
Gisborne	128	142	-9.9%	0.8%	330	426	-22.5%	52	61	-14.8%
Hawke's Bay	570	623	-8.5%	3.4%	1,397	1,463	-4.5%	441	401	10.0%
Taranaki	430	334	28.7%	2.5%	1,057	1,080	-2.1%	202	166	21.7%
Manawatu-Wanganui	842	783	7.5%	5.0%	2,053	2,146	-4.3%	764	671	13.9%
Wellington	1,596	1,442	10.7%	9.5%	3,096	3,163	-2.1%	1,156	960	20.4%
Tasman	150	131	14.5%	0.9%	494	470	5.1%	16	11	45.5%
Nelson	156	129	20.9%	0.9%	433	402	7.7%	178	162	9.9%
Marlborough	149	139	7.2%	0.9%	347	361	-3.9%	62	56	10.7%
West Coast	130	89	46.1%	0.8%	321	304	5.6%	26	27	-3.7%
Canterbury	2,464	2,209	11.5%	14.6%	5,527	5,551	-0.4%	2,084	1,976	5.5%
Otago	777	708	9.7%	4.6%	1,965	2,006	-2.0%	460	436	5.5%
Southland	333	311	7.1%	2.0%	970	958	1.3%	168	147	14.3%
Other	52	64	-18.8%	0.3%	134	128	4.7%	0	0	0.0%
NZ Total	16,875	15,422	9.4%	100.0%	40,032	40,664	-1.6%	13,863	12,335	12.4%

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Approvals are subject to responsible lending inquiries. UDC's loan eligibility criteria, fees, terms and conditions apply.

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - September 2025

MAKE	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/- %	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	2,564	2,228	15.1%	24.7%	14,965	21.2%
Mitsubishi	1,755	1,112	57.8%	16.9%	7,846	11.1%
Kia	945	811	16.5%	9.1%	6,769	9.6%
Mazda	523	332	57.5%	5.0%	3,384	4.8%
Ford	415	602	-31.1%	4.0%	3,089	4.4%
Suzuki	414	359	15.3%	4.0%	3,670	5.2%
Hyundai	395	336	17.6%	3.8%	2,658	3.8%
MG	375	336	11.6%	3.6%	3,121	4.4%
GWM	295	200	47.5%	2.8%	2,438	3.5%
Honda	254	184	38.0%	2.5%	2,602	3.7%
Tesla	228	100	128.0%	2.2%	1,243	1.8%
Chery	225	0	22,500.0%	2.2%	454	0.6%
BMW	184	171	7.6%	1.8%	1,411	2.0%
Subaru	174	152	14.5%	1.7%	1,781	2.5%
Volkswagen	167	210	-20.5%	1.6%	1,317	1.9%
Audi	167	90	85.6%	1.6%	993	1.4%
Nissan	134	316	-57.6%	1.3%	1,873	2.7%
Lexus	134	88	52.3%	1.3%	1,153	1.6%
Mercedes-Benz	107	74	44.6%	1.0%	1,059	1.5%
BYD	107	84	27.4%	1.0%	1,393	2.0%
Mini	87	90	-3.3%	0.8%	736	1.0%
Land Rover	85	93	-8.6%	0.8%	869	1.2%
Skoda	80	112	-28.6%	0.8%	746	1.1%
Jaecoo	74	23	221.7%	0.7%	698	1.0%
Omoda	70	42	66.7%	0.7%	616	0.9%
Volvo	55	39	41.0%	0.5%	385	0.5%
Porsche	45	55	-18.2%	0.4%	419	0.6%
Leapmotor	37	0	3,700.0%	0.4%	184	0.3%
Cupra	30	65	-53.8%	0.3%	251	0.4%
Mahindra	29	14	107.1%	0.3%	257	0.4%
Peugeot	26	45	-42.2%	0.3%	365	0.5%
Jeep	24	11	118.2%	0.2%	199	0.3%
Isuzu	23	27	-14.8%	0.2%	158	0.2%
Geely	21	0	2,100.0%	0.2%	74	0.1%
Opel	18	5	260.0%	0.2%	38	0.1%
KGM	15	17	-11.8%	0.1%	304	0.4%
Jaguar	12	37	-67.6%	0.1%	169	0.2%
Fiat	11	14	-21.4%	0.1%	49	0.1%
Maserati	8	2	300.0%	0.1%	37	0.1%
GMC	8	0	800.0%	0.1%	28	0.0%
Ineos	7	3	133.3%	0.1%	39	0.1%
Bentley	7	0	700.0%	0.1%	25	0.0%
Smart	4	0	400.0%	0.0%	19	0.0%
Polestar	4	38	-89.5%	0.0%	435	0.6%
Others	20	53	-62.3%	0.2%	321	0.5%
Total	10,362	8,570	20.9%	100.0%	70,640	100.0%

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - September 2025

MAKE	MODEL	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/- %	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	RAV4	1,281	1,172	9.3%	12.4%	7,500	10.6%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	810	362	123.8%	7.8%	3,063	4.3%
Mitsubishi	ASX	805	379	112.4%	7.8%	3,649	5.2%
Toyota	Corolla	434	262	65.6%	4.2%	1,279	1.8%
Ford	Everest	363	210	72.9%	3.5%	2,075	2.9%
Kia	Seltos	258	370	-30.3%	2.5%	2,728	3.9%
Hyundai	Tucson	218	55	296.4%	2.1%	1,073	1.5%
Toyota	Yaris Cross	212	381	-44.4%	2.0%	996	1.4%
MG	ZS	206	118	74.6%	2.0%	1,526	2.2%
Tesla	Model Y	190	88	115.9%	1.8%	995	1.4%
Kia	Sportage	174	155	12.3%	1.7%	983	1.4%
GWM	Haval H6	168	88	90.9%	1.6%	1,292	1.8%
Chery	Tiggo 4 Pro	158	0	15,800.0%	1.5%	332	0.5%
Kia	Stonic	155	83	86.7%	1.5%	1,050	1.5%
Toyota	Yaris	154	81	90.1%	1.5%	648	0.9%
Toyota	Land Cruiser Prado	146	2	7,200.0%	1.4%	1,284	1.8%
Kia	Carnival	146	62	135.5%	1.4%	413	0.6%
Suzuki	Fronx	143	0	14,300.0%	1.4%	629	0.9%
Suzuki	Swift	132	178	-25.8%	1.3%	1,436	2.0%
Mazda	Mazda3	131	20	555.0%	1.3%	418	0.6%
Toyota	Corolla Cross	129	72	79.2%	1.2%	1,085	1.5%
Mazda	CX-30	117	57	105.3%	1.1%	444	0.6%
Mazda	CX-5	115	154	-25.3%	1.1%	1,173	1.7%
Kia	Sorento	105	63	66.7%	1.0%	669	0.9%
Hyundai	Kona	98	84	16.7%	0.9%	923	1.3%
Gwm	Haval Jolion	89	80	11.3%	0.9%	700	1.0%
Honda	Jazz	87	29	200.0%	0.8%	663	0.9%
Mitsubishi	Pajero Sport	84	80	5.0%	0.8%	378	0.5%
Subaru	Outback	77	77	0.0%	0.7%	847	1.2%
Jaecoo	J7	74	23	221.7%	0.7%	698	1.0%
Suzuki	Jimny	73	96	-24.0%	0.7%	683	1.0%
Volkswagen	Tiguan	66	39	69.2%	0.6%	605	0.9%
Hyundai	Santa Fe	66	86	-23.3%	0.6%	449	0.6%
Honda	CR-V	66	44	50.0%	0.6%	523	0.7%
MG	HS	65	52	25.0%	0.6%	542	0.8%
Mazda	CX-80	64	0	6,400.0%	0.6%	403	0.6%
Nissan	X-Trail	62	62	0.0%	0.6%	1,012	1.4%
Toyota	Land Cruiser	58	31	87.1%	0.6%	407	0.6%
Toyota	Highlander	57	131	-56.5%	0.6%	789	1.1%
Audi	Q5	56	0	5,600.0%	0.5%	176	0.2%
Mitsubishi	Eclipse Cross	56	291	-80.8%	0.5%	756	1.1%
Volkswagen	Golf	52	46	13.0%	0.5%	337	0.5%
Subaru	Forester	51	25	104.0%	0.5%	437	0.6%
Mini	Countryman	51	45	13.3%	0.5%	378	0.5%
Nissan	Qashqai	50	44	13.6%	0.5%	722	1.0%
Others		2,210	2,793	-20.9%	21.3%	21,472	30.4%
Total		10,362	8,570	20.9%	100.0%	70,640	100.0%

Marque reaches major milestone

Toyota has now sold more than 100,000 new hybrids in New Zealand since the first Prius was launched back here in 2003.

Today, the segment makes up 95 per cent of its passenger vehicle sales with the RAV4 Hybrid leading the charge as the country's most popular new car of 2025.

"This milestone reflects the commitment of drivers to reducing emissions and the growing appeal of practical, affordable hybrids," says Susanne Hardy, assistant vice-president of marketing, sustainability and technology.

"It's a critical step toward our goal of reducing our CO2 emissions by 46 per cent by 2030, and achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 across our operations and fleet."

The sale of 100,000 hybrids represents a saving of 120,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year, the equivalent of adding 33,000 battery electric vehicles to the fleet.

Hardy adds the increase in popularity of hybrids corresponds to an increase in performance and economy from Toyota's powertrains.

"Our hybrid vehicles continue to get better, with greater efficiency without sacrificing performance," she says. "The sale of our 100,000th hybrid is a significant milestone.

"But it's also just the beginning for us. Toyota is moving towards being a mobility company for all so how we reach the net-zero ambition

is key. It is our responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from all products we sell and how we sell them."

'FOCUS ON INNOVATION'

Xpeng is planning to open a showroom in Auckland before the end of 2025 with the G6 set to be its first model launched here.

The Chinese EV company, which was founded in 2014, plans to expand with branches in Hamilton, Tauranga, Wellington and Christchurch next year.

"New Zealand is a natural launchpad for XPeng's operation given the market's strong focus on innovation, sustainability and premium driving experiences," says Damian Royce, Xpeng NZ's head of marketing. "We're confident we can deliver world-class service and accelerate EV adoption."

Kiwi specifications for the G6 have yet to be revealed, but across the Tasman the rear-wheel-drive medium-sized SUV comes with a 66kWh or 87.5kWh battery.

EXPANDING PRESENCE

Morrison Motor Group has bought Mid Canterbury Hyundai and Isuzu Ashburton, which are now known as Morrison Hyundai and Isuzu.

The family-owned business says the deal expands its portfolio and presence in the region. "This addition brings with it not only

Up by 21%

Registrations of new cars totalled 10,362 last month for a rise of 20.9 per cent compared to 8,570 in September 2024. The best-selling model was Toyota's RAV4 on 1,281 units. Next up were Mitsubishi's Outlander and ASX with 810 and 805 respectively, the Corolla on 434 and the Ford Everest with 363. Last month's top marque was Toyota with 2,564. Mitsubishi claimed second on 1,755 with Kia third on 945.

Spending on fuel using electronic cards also fell by \$40m or 7.7 per cent on an annual basis.

CONFERENCE TIME

Tickets are selling fast for the Financial Services Federation's annual conference and dinner in Auckland on November 6 with regulation, competition and the country's credit landscape in the spotlight.

For the first time, the Commerce Commission and Financial Markets Authority will share the stage to address the upcoming transfer of consumer credit regulation from the former to the latter.

The shift is expected to see a new licensing model and streamlined oversight rolled out across the sector, but key questions remain about timing, implementation and impact.

In a pre-election panel, MPs from major parties will set out perspectives on pressing issues affecting financial services, including regulation overreach and access to capital as the industry pushes for a more competitive environment heading into 2026.

Other speakers include Todd Hunter, chief executive of Turners Automotive Group, and Kimberley Gargiulo, head of New Zealand for SG Fleet. Visit www.fsf.org.nz for more details. 🌐

new brands, but also the talented and dedicated team that has been serving the community for years."

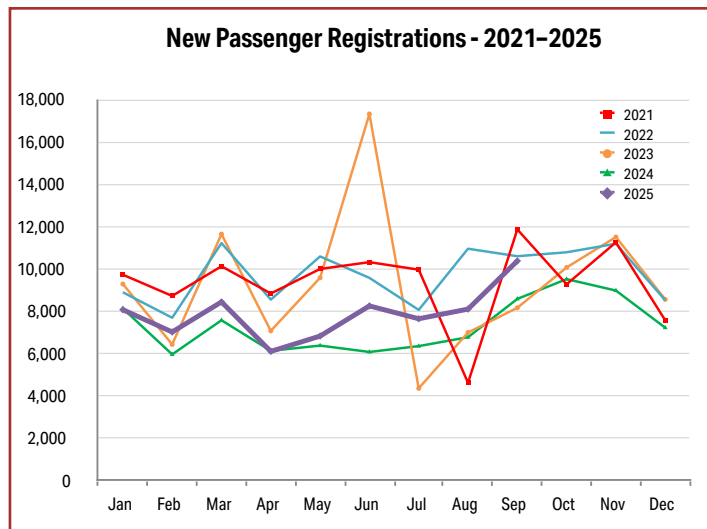
A new showroom for Hyundai and Isuzu is set to be constructed in late 2027 alongside Morrison's existing Ashburton Mitsubishi dealership.

CAR SPENDING CLIMBS

Retail expenditure on motor vehicles using electronic cards totalled \$201 million in August for an increase of \$7m, or 3.6 per cent, from the same month in 2024.

The latest seasonally adjusted figure also shows transactions across the sector fell by \$1.7m or 0.9 per cent when compared with July 2025.

Transactions for fuel declined by \$500,000 or 0.1 per cent month-on-month to total \$477m in August, reports Stats NZ.



MAKE	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/- %	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	607	868	-30.1%	5.9%	5,152	7.3%
Plug-in hybrid electric	410	417	-1.7%	4.0%	3,387	4.8%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	4,099	3,312	23.8%	39.6%	27,051	38.3%
Petrol	4,346	3,389	28.2%	41.9%	29,382	41.6%
Diesel	900	584	54.1%	8.7%	5,668	8.0%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	10,362	8,570	20.9%		70,640	

Rebound from rates drop awaited

The Colonial Motor Company is maintaining a “cautious watching brief” on New Zealand’s economy and the automotive sector.

Chairman Ash Waugh says all industries, except agribusiness, are awaiting rebounds from cuts in the official cash and interest rates.

And positive impacts are expected from policy changes the government has made and continues to introduce.

“However, it appears economic headwinds along with global geopolitical instability will continue to hamper growth,” he says.

“We see a two-speed economy. On the downside we have metropolitan North Island, while

on the upside are the South Island and rural New Zealand. Until our metro areas in the North Island and the truck business enjoy the same trading environment, we maintain a cautious watching brief.”

Colonial’s trading profit after tax of \$17.83 million for 2024/25 was better than expected. That was 0.3 per cent lower than \$17.88m achieved in the prior year.

Another key figure in the

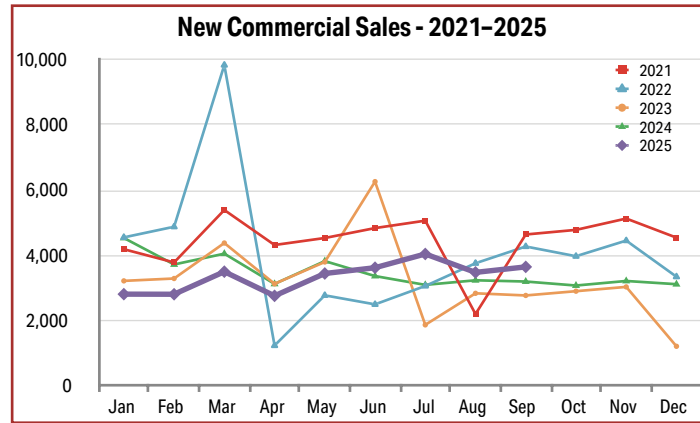
company’s results includes total revenue of \$1 billion, down slightly from \$1.01b.

Waugh describes the market as “patchy at best” during the past fiscal year with new cars, light commercials and trucks particularly affected by the sluggish economy and high inventory levels.

This resulted in pressured trading, especially in the North Island’s metro markets.

On the flipside, used-car operations across the group showed strong growth and contributed positively to the overall results.

Waugh says most of the group’s dealerships responded well to the “new normal” trading market by addressing cost structures



MAKE	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/-%	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	1,037	758	36.8%	28.5%	8,338	27.7%
Ford	956	1,058	-9.6%	26.3%	7,983	26.5%
Mitsubishi	342	271	26.2%	9.4%	2,548	8.5%
Isuzu	198	138	43.5%	5.4%	1,242	4.1%
LDV	139	63	120.6%	3.8%	1,009	3.3%
Mercedes-Benz	114	129	-11.6%	3.1%	631	2.1%
Nissan	87	147	-40.8%	2.4%	2,058	6.8%
BYD	81	0	8,100.0%	2.2%	1,501	5.0%
Volkswagen	79	91	-13.2%	2.2%	419	1.4%
GWM	74	32	131.3%	2.0%	373	1.2%
Fiat	57	29	96.6%	1.6%	294	1.0%
Kia	56	0	5,600.0%	1.5%	243	0.8%
Iveco	53	46	15.2%	1.5%	284	0.9%
Hino	48	50	-4.0%	1.3%	416	1.4%
Fuso	44	58	-24.1%	1.2%	417	1.4%
Hyundai	26	25	4.0%	0.7%	227	0.8%
Scania	21	56	-62.5%	0.6%	281	0.9%
Renault	21	19	10.5%	0.6%	203	0.7%
DAF	21	20	5.0%	0.6%	113	0.4%
CRRC	21	0	2,100.0%	0.6%	111	0.4%
Others	162	186	-12.9%	4.5%	1,443	4.8%
Total	3,637	3,176	14.5%	100.0%	30,134	100.0%

MAKE	MODEL	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/-%	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Ford	Ranger	827	926	-10.7%	22.7%	7,029	23.3%
Toyota	Hilux	769	622	23.6%	21.1%	6,473	21.5%
Mitsubishi	Triton	342	270	26.7%	9.4%	2,547	8.5%
Toyota	Hiace	233	112	108.0%	6.4%	1,521	5.0%
Ford	Transit	129	132	-2.3%	3.5%	953	3.2%
Isuzu	D-Max	126	74	70.3%	3.5%	698	2.3%
Mercedes-Benz	Sprinter	91	120	-24.2%	2.5%	509	1.7%
Nissan	Navara	87	147	-40.8%	2.4%	2,058	6.8%
BYD	Shark 6	81	0	8,100.0%	2.2%	1,501	5.0%
GWM	Cannon	74	32	131.3%	2.0%	373	1.2%
LDV	Deliver 9	59	27	118.5%	1.6%	266	0.9%
Fiat	Ducato	57	29	96.6%	1.6%	286	0.9%
Kia	Tasman	56	0	5,600.0%	1.5%	243	0.8%
Iveco	Daily	43	34	26.5%	1.2%	208	0.7%
Volkswagen	T6	35	5	600.0%	1.0%	74	0.2%
Toyota	Land Cruiser	35	24	45.8%	1.0%	343	1.1%
Isuzu	F Series	34	24	41.7%	0.9%	221	0.7%
Isuzu	N Series	33	27	22.2%	0.9%	259	0.9%
Hino	300	29	25	16.0%	0.8%	174	0.6%
LDV	T60	22	19	15.8%	0.6%	318	1.1%
Others		475	527	-9.9%	13.1%	4,080	13.5%
Total		3,637	3,176	14.5%	100.0%	30,134	100.0%

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MAGAZINE

◀ and finding new business in a challenging environment.

New-vehicle sales for the first six months of 2025 were on a par with 2024 after increasing 1.3 per cent to 63,458 units. But the commercial market dropped by 18.4 per cent in preference to mid-sized and large SUVs.

“The Ford Ranger protected its share in this reduced market but the decline in that segment is of some concern as this has been a sweet spot for a number of years now,” he adds.

“The good news is the introduction of the hybrid Ranger along with the Ranger Super Duty.”

Waugh says Southpac had a difficult year as trucking volumes fell off in all but the dairy and wider agribusiness sector.

This led to inventory being held for longer periods across the

entire industry and resulted in an aggressive trading environment.

Colonial’s JAC Motors initiative continued its launch “into a very competitive market”, but the company is confident its ongoing commitment to the brand is an important strategic investment in a Chinese-sourced product range.

“We were delighted to secure

the Mitsubishi franchise in Manukau, south Auckland, in May and establish that dealership on our Bakerfield Place site trading as Manukau Autos,” Waugh adds.

“As part of that change, the Southern Autos business relocated its central hub of operations to Botany Road.”

A rebuild of Fagan Motors in

Masterton has been completed, while Avon City Ford’s new sales and service facility in Rangiora is operational. Colonial also recently bought extra land in Queenstown next to its Glenda Drive dealership to protect its options in the fast-growing region.

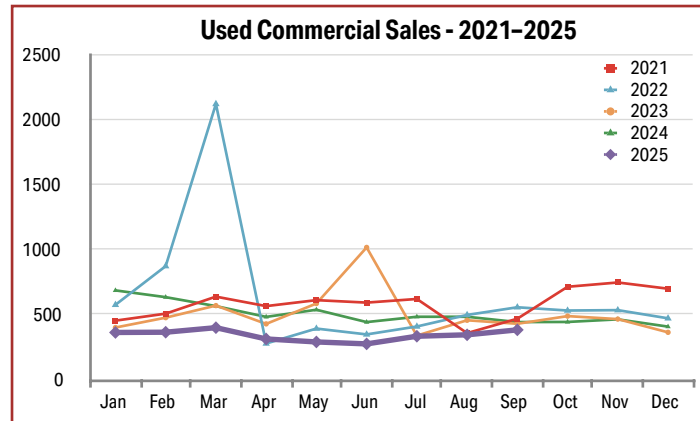
BOOST FOR MARKET

There were 3,637 new commercials registered during September for a year-on-year increase of 14.5 per cent from 3,176 in the same month of 2024.

The Ford Ranger was the top-selling model with 827 units.

Kia’s Tasman secured 56 registrations in September to bring its total to 243 in the three months since its launch here.

There were 383 used commercials registered, down by 16 per cent. ☹



MAKE	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/- %	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	145	233	-37.8%	37.9%	1,302	42.4%
Nissan	84	76	10.5%	21.9%	605	19.7%
Mitsubishi	25	18	38.9%	6.5%	172	5.6%
Hino	25	26	-3.8%	6.5%	201	6.5%
Isuzu	19	21	-9.5%	5.0%	185	6.0%
Ford	18	22	-18.2%	4.7%	168	5.5%
LDV	12	2	500.0%	3.1%	45	1.5%
Suzuki	9	10	-10.0%	2.3%	61	2.0%
UD Trucks	5	1	400.0%	1.3%	19	0.6%
Daihatsu	5	7	-28.6%	1.3%	52	1.7%
Mercedes-Benz	4	6	-33.3%	1.0%	24	0.8%
Mazda	4	6	-33.3%	1.0%	30	1.0%
Chevrolet	4	4	0.0%	1.0%	30	1.0%
Volkswagen	3	4	-25.0%	0.8%	25	0.8%
Iveco	3	1	200.0%	0.8%	15	0.5%
Fuso	3	2	50.0%	0.8%	18	0.6%
Fiat	3	3	0.0%	0.8%	16	0.5%
Subaru	2	0	200.0%	0.5%	9	0.3%
Renault	2	2	0.0%	0.5%	8	0.3%
Holden	2	3	-33.3%	0.5%	18	0.6%
Others	6	9	-33.3%	1.6%	71	2.3%
Total	383	456	-16.0%	100.0%	3,074	100.0%

MAKE	MODEL	SEP'25	SEP'24	+/- %	SEP'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Hiace	109	163	-33.1%	28.5%	952	31.0%
Nissan	NV200	25	14	78.6%	6.5%	164	5.3%
Nissan	NV350	23	40	-42.5%	6.0%	214	7.0%
Hino	Dutro	22	17	29.4%	5.7%	155	5.0%
Toyota	Dyna	17	11	54.5%	4.4%	123	4.0%
Fuso	Canter	17	12	41.7%	4.4%	119	3.9%
Nissan	Caravan	16	9	77.8%	4.2%	114	3.7%
Nissan	Vanette	15	1	1,400.0%	3.9%	46	1.5%
Ford	Ranger	13	12	8.3%	3.4%	78	2.5%
Suzuki	Carry	9	8	12.5%	2.3%	61	2.0%
Toyota	Hilux	8	5	60.0%	2.1%	58	1.9%
Isuzu	Elf	8	14	-42.9%	2.1%	115	3.7%
Toyota	Regius	6	21	-71.4%	1.6%	66	2.1%
Chevrolet	G10	6	0	600.0%	1.6%	10	0.3%
LDV	T60	5	0	500.0%	1.3%	29	0.9%
UD Trucks	Quon	5	0	500.0%	1.3%	13	0.4%
Daihatsu	Hijet	5	7	-28.6%	1.3%	52	1.7%
Isuzu	Forward	5	5	0.0%	1.3%	33	1.1%
Toyota	Toyocace	4	8	-50.0%	1.0%	76	2.5%
Mitsubishi	Rosa	4	3	33.3%	1.0%	19	0.6%
Others		61	106	-42.5%	15.9%	577	18.8%
Total		383	456	-16.0%	100.0%	3,074	100.0%



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Association defends agency model

Rise in sales

Imports of new cars in September came in at 10,195. This was up 51.3 per cent from 6,739 in the same month of last year and up by 29.2 per cent from 7,892 in August.

The registrations of 10,362 new passenger vehicles were completed last month, which was 20.9 per cent more than the 8,570 achieved in September 2024 and 28.1 per cent higher than August's total of 8,090.

Last month's statistics have resulted in the stock of new cars still to be registered falling by 167 to 69,325.

Daily sales, as averaged over the previous 12 months, stand at 264 units per day and up from 251 a year ago.

September's results mean stock at-hand has dropped to 263 days if sales continue at the current rate. In the same month of last year, it stood at 301 days.

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) has welcomed a court decision to dismiss an appeal brought by a group of dealers.

It says the outcome reinforces the right of car brands to modernise their operations in-line with global business practices and consumer expectations.

The decision by the federal court relates to a matter concerning commercial arrangements between Mercedes-Benz Australia-Pacific and 38 of the company's dealers.

Tony Weber, chief executive of the FCAI, says its outcome affirms the principle that private companies should be free to structure operations to best manage their businesses without excessive regulatory interference.

"This decision is a recognition from the courts that businesses

have the right to choose how they go to market," he adds.

"The agency model is one of many approaches being explored internationally. Preserving the freedom to adopt such models ensures consumers aren't left behind as the market evolves.

"Calls for increased red tape and compensation schemes tied to traditional distribution models ignore the fact many dealerships are part of multi-billion-dollar enterprises.

"Automotive brands and multi-site, publicly listed dealership groups have a sophisticated commercial relationship. This is no longer a sector defined by small family operations. Dealerships are highly capitalised and shouldn't be shielded from commercial evolution."

According to 2024 data

from the Australian Automotive Dealer Association, 12 per cent of dealerships' gross profit is generated by new-car sales, says Weber.

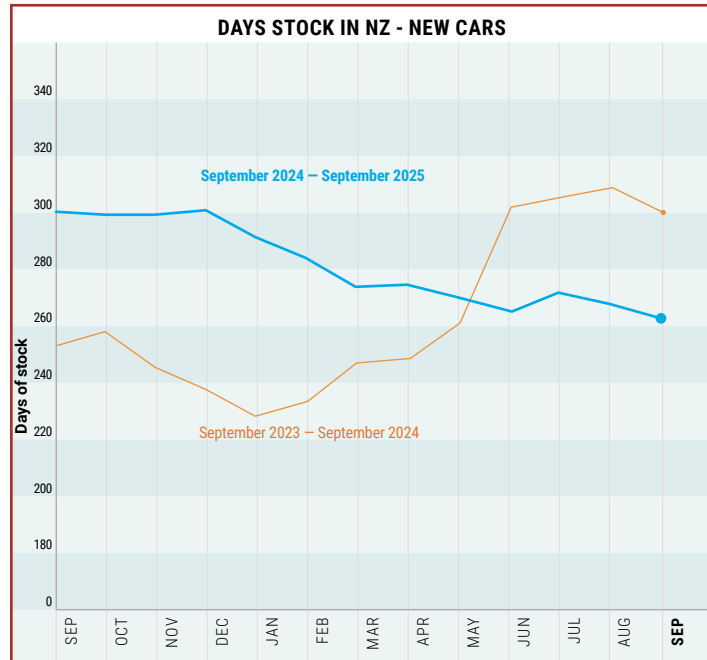
"This demonstrates the profitability of a successful dealership is more than just sales," he adds. "The agency model has long been used by many sectors of the economy in many countries around the world.

"The suggestion less competition or higher prices will follow from this ruling isn't supported by evidence. Using the levers of government to restrict the evolution of business models is a recipe for higher costs and fewer choices for consumers."

FRANCHISE ON-BOARD
Bay European in Napier has celebrated its first anniversary in a newly refurbished showroom

Dealer stock of new cars in New Zealand

	CARSALES		VARIANCE	STOCK	DAILY SALES -12-MONTH AVERAGE	DAYS STOCK AT HAND
	IMPORTED	REGISTERED				
Sep '24	6,739	8,570	-1,831	75,630	251	301
Oct '24	8,331	9,483	-1,152	74,478	250	298
Nov '24	6,771	8,952	-2,181	72,297	243	298
Dec '24	6,949	7,186	-237	72,060	239	301
Jan '25	5,756	8,053	-2,297	69,763	239	292
Feb '25	5,682	6,993	-1,311	68,452	242	283
Mar '25	6,951	8,410	-1,459	66,993	244	274
Apr '25	6,421	6,083	338	67,331	244	275
May '25	5,708	6,806	-1,098	66,233	246	270
Jun '25	8,391	8,230	161	66,394	252	264
Jul '25	10,909	7,613	3,296	69,690	255	273
Aug '25	7,892	8,090	-198	69,492	259	268
Sep '25	10,195	10,362	-167	69,325	264	263
Year to date	67,905	70,640				
Change on last month	29.2%	28.1%		-0.2%		
Change on Sep 2024	51.3%	20.9%		-8.3%		
	MORE IMPORTED	MORE SOLD		LESS STOCK		



by securing a franchise deal with commercial ute brand JAC.

Until now the dealership has sold used vehicles, specialising in late-model European cars, but it now also represents the Chinese marque as Hawke's Bay JAC.

Tim Murphy, dealer principal, says: "I couldn't be more chuffed to be celebrate not only one year in the newly refurbished showroom, but to also welcome our first OEM brand onto the same location".

He notes these achievements wouldn't have happened without the support of customers, friends and family.

Bay European has been operating in Hawke's Bay since 2021 and is part of the wider ABM Group of companies, which has been involved in motor, equipment, finance and leasing markets since 2007. The business shares its site in Prebensen Drive, Onekawa, with Hollywood Motors and there's a six-bay workshop to support servicing needs.



Andrew Crow, general manager of JAC NZ, says partnering with the Bay European team is a milestone for the brand, which has the T9 ute and a range of electric and light diesel trucks in its local line-up.

GETTING CHARGED UP
Meridian Energy has opened a new fast-charging hub at Auckland Airport's shopping precinct.

It features five DC fast chargers for up to 160kW with each one having two points to ensure 10 vehicles can top up at the same time. There is dynamic power allocation to reduce wait times and maximise efficiency, and two chargers are designed and prioritised for motorists with accessibility needs.

A drive-through charger for EVs towing trailers, boats or caravans is available and the site has space to add more chargers as demand increases.

Joanna Yip, Meridian's public charging product manager, says: "The airport is a high-traffic gateway, so it's the perfect location to showcase our commitment to decarbonisation and driver-centric design."

Every kilowatt delivered at the new hub is matched with certified renewable energy generated by Meridian's hydro stations and wind farms.

Charging at the site also helps fund community decarbonisation projects via the company's certified renewable energy programme. ☀

Imports climb

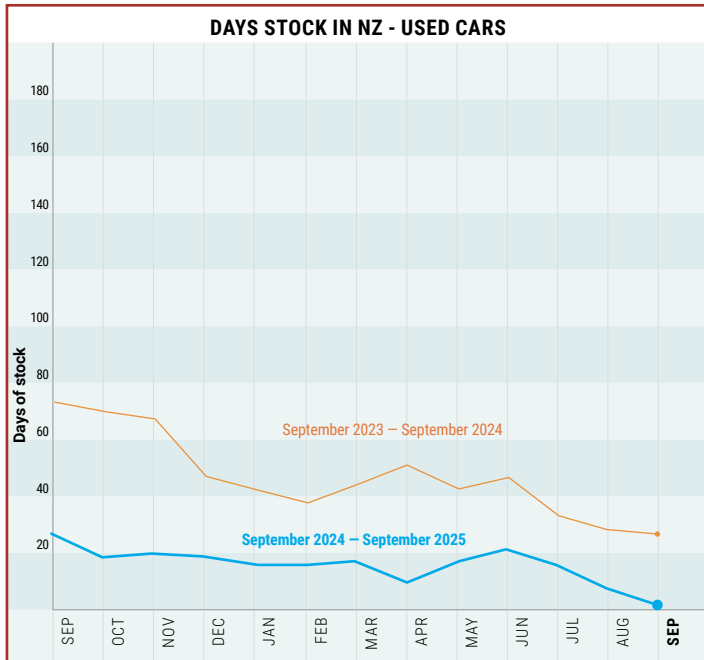
There were 5,670 used passenger vehicles imported in September, which represented an increase of 12.4 per cent from the same month in 2024 when 5,045 came into New Zealand.

The latest total was up by 9.1 per cent from 5,196 in August this year.

Some 7,072 units were registered last month, down by 1.7 per cent from 7,191 during the same month of 2024 and for a decrease of 5.4 per cent from 7,473 during August.

With 1,402 fewer used cars crossing the border than registered during September – the third biggest decrease of 2025 – unregistered stock on dealers' yards or in compliance shops came to 511 units.

This was 93.9 per cent lower than the 8,337 a year ago and down by 73.3 per cent from 1,913 at the end of August. Average daily registrations during September were 235 compared to 297 a year ago.

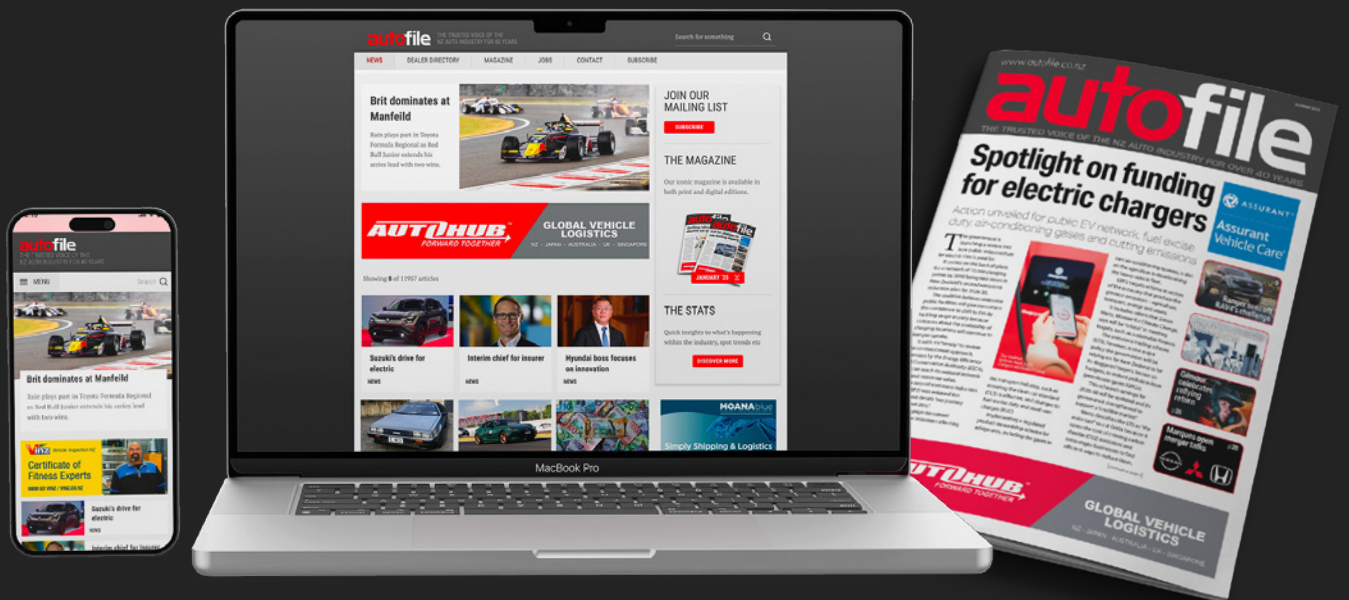


	CAR SALES		VARIANCE	STOCK	DAILY SALES -12-MONTH AVERAGE	DAYS STOCK AT HAND
	IMPORTED	REGISTERED				
Sep '24	5,045	7,191	-2,146	8,337	297	28
Oct '24	4,714	7,311	-2,597	5,740	291	20
Nov '24	7,024	6,912	112	5,852	283	21
Dec '24	6,642	7,130	-488	5,364	268	20
Jan '25	6,667	7,372	-705	4,659	264	18
Feb '25	6,602	6,790	-188	4,471	258	17
Mar '25	7,615	7,269	346	4,817	254	19
Apr '25	4,917	6,438	-1,521	3,296	247	13
May '25	8,457	7,264	1,193	4,489	243	18
Jun '25	7,756	6,806	950	5,439	240	23
Jul '25	6,813	8,062	-1,249	4,190	238	18
Aug '25	5,196	7,473	-2,277	1,913	236	8
Sep '25	5,670	7,072	-1,402	511	235	2
Year to date	59,693	64,546				
Change on last month	9.1%	-5.4%		-73.3%		
Change on Sep 2024	12.4%	-1.7%		-93.9%		
	MORE IMPORTED	LESS SOLD		LESS STOCK		

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