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Safety feature rules risk to fleet renewal

New and used sectors implore coalition to ensure any extra mandatory requirements are phased in

Officials are being warned older cars will remain in the fleet for longer if mandates are introduced that prevent "safer-than-current" vehicles from coming into the country.

Industry members have raised concerns over proposals to make a number of advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS) compulsory at the border and want any fresh rules applied to the used sector at least 16 months after they come into force for new vehicles.

The government is considering mandating automatic emergency braking (AEB), lane-keep support systems, and acoustic vehicle alert for "quiet" electric and hybrid models for new and used light and heavy imports.

A consultation document prepared by the NZTA says it's looking at either mandating all those features, keeping the status quo or raising awareness by encouraging people to buy



AEB is among the safety features that may become mandatory for imports

vehicles with extra safety devices through education and advertising.

Any land-transport rule changes arising from the plans are set to be signed off by mid-2026.

If made compulsory, the additional features would be checked at the border but vehicles already in the fleet wouldn't need to have them added.

Consultation on the matter has closed and officials are reviewing feedback before making

recommendations to James Meager, Associate Minister of Transport.

The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA) is urging the government to consider the differences between the new and used sectors when deciding on the timing of any rule changes.

Kit Wilkerson, head of policy and strategy, says: "Applying new-vehicle mandate logic to used imports assumes that

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Australia can learn from across ditch

Heath Barclay outlines why New Zealand is a leader with its end-of-life tyres scheme

The end-of-life tyre (ELT) discussion in Australia has gone into overdrive and I can't be happier to see it being prioritised.

Within the space of two weeks in November, the Australian House of Representatives' standing committee on industry, innovation and science announced an end-to-end inquiry into the tyre industry, and the Trans-Tasman Recycling Alliance (TTRA) was launched.

Between our two countries, there are 600,000 tonnes of ELTs to process and lessons can be learnt from each other. In many ways, New Zealand is ahead of the curve with its successful scheme.

Tyrewise is a great example of what can be achieved when the industry bands together backed by the government. I was involved in developing it before moving to Australia in 2013 and it becoming mandatory is to be celebrated.

For us, it meant levelling the playing field and a win for those in the industry who already took sustainable operations seriously.

When John Staples, our former director of NZ business, retired, he saw his involvement in Tyrewise becoming mandatory as a major achievement of his 40-year career.

Australia can learn from New Zealand's actions. I'm hoping the inquiry, and information sharing and objectives of the TTRA, highlight there's a clear opportunity for an equally successful scheme here. I'm not just saying this because I'm a proud Kiwi myself, but this is an area in which New Zealand has led the way.



HEATH BARCLAY
Managing director,
Bridgestone ANZ

With the significant ELT volumes generated each year across both countries, Australia has some extra challenges to overcome. Rogue operators mean poor practices, such as illegal dumping and exporting, continue, and there's a

big number of free riders importing product and not contributing to our current voluntary scheme.

A simple way to create greater governance around more sustainable operators and increased participation in a product stewardship scheme is to make it mandatory.

Reputable brands such as Bridgestone are investing in researching new markets and end-of-life solutions through Tyre Stewardship Australia, but it should be a level playing field and a voluntary scheme just isn't enough.

The industry still has a long way to go and there's so much opportunity, for example, around retreading truck tyres. We have to reduce our risk and reliance on export markets for tyre-derived fuel by developing and supporting local markets for tyre-derived products and retreading.

We need to create greater governance around rogue operators, provide more options for recycling in regional and remote areas, and boost motivation for retailers to adopt more sustainable outcomes. This requires more funding and accountability.

If we look to New Zealand, there's a framework to be considered for effective product stewardship in Australia. ☺

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DIRECTORS

Darren Wiltshire
dazzz@autofile.co.nz
ph. 021 0284 7428

Brian McCutcheon
brian@autofile.co.nz
ph. 021 455 775

DESIGNER

Adrian Payne
arpayne@gmail.com

EDITOR

Darren Risby
ris@autofile.co.nz

JOURNALISTS

Matthew Lowe
matthew@autofile.co.nz

Sue Brebner-Fox
sue@autofile.co.nz

MOTORSPORT

Mark Baker
veritas.nz@xtra.co.nz

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excluding non-compliant vehicles will somehow raise standards automatically.

“In reality, it can reduce fleet renewal by preventing otherwise safer-than-current vehicles from entering the market. When replacement slows, older vehicles remain in service longer, delaying overall fleet improvement.”

He adds new-vehicle mandates raise the future standard of models globally and suggests used-import policy should focus on maximising the rate at which New Zealand’s existing fleet is upgraded within affordability constraints.

“Used-import mandates must be timed to when better-than-current vehicles are actually available in sufficient numbers, rather than mirroring new-vehicle timelines.”

VIA supports the intent to lift road safety through modern technologies, but raises concerns over the timing, affordability and operational feasibility of such changes for used imports.

It opposes a 2027 start date for features such as AEB to be compulsory for used light vehicles because it says this would precede the practical supply window for affordable, eight to 12-year-old Japanese vehicles relied on by many Kiwi households and small to medium-sized businesses.

“If mandates are set ahead of real-world availability in Japan’s used fleet and ahead of what households can afford, New Zealanders will be priced out of upgrades and will hold on to older vehicles longer,” explains Wilkerson.

“Our used-import channel relies overwhelmingly on Japanese stock. Regulatory timelines should align with the real arrival curve of safety technology into Japan’s



James Meager, Associate Minister of Transport, is expected to make decisions on ADAS rules in mid-2026

used fleet and into New Zealand’s affordability band, not simply with Japan’s new-vehicle rule dates.”

VIA recommends a minimum of 16 months from safety features being mandatory in new vehicles before they become compulsory for entry compliance with used.

New safety requirements for imports are also likely to increase the cost for companies trying to secure compliant models from Japan because they will reduce the range that meets the required standards.

“That narrowing creates scarcity at auctions, which increases hammer prices for remaining compliant vehicles,” adds Wilkerson.

“The used-import market isn’t a random slice of Japan’s fleet. It’s a tightly filtered subset shaped by price, mileage, grade and household affordability. That matters because each additional regulatory requirement narrows the compliant supply set.”

VIA urges caution against any policies introducing mandates before supply exists in the used-fleet pipeline from Japan.

The association highlights the mean age of used imports is 11 years but says if that was the compliance threshold it would risk eliminating about 50 per cent of current used supply. It suggests 12 years would be better to base ADAS policies on, although this would still result in about a 20 per cent reduction in supply.

In 2027, New Zealand will primarily import 2015-16 Japanese vehicles. In that range, AEB fitment was incomplete and concentrated in higher-specification trims, which means early mandates may lead to a scarcity of suitable models and higher prices.

“AEB will be fully mandated in Japan from the end of this year, which means New Zealand will inevitably receive AEB-equipped vehicles as they age,” says Wilkerson.

“Meaningful AEB volumes

for us begin around 2029, large volumes arrive around 2033 and broad availability occurs in the early 2030s once the 12-year offset is applied. In practical terms, New Zealand cannot ‘fall behind’ Japan in used-import safety standards.

“It can only mistime access by setting requirements ahead of when those vehicles are available and affordable in the source market’s used fleet.”

Lane-departure warning (LDW) and lane-keep assist (LKA) technology aren’t mandated in Japan and remain trim-dependent, which makes it unclear how quickly either will become prevalent in Japan’s used fleet.

“That uncertainty is why fixed-date mandates are risky,” continues Wilkerson. “On our current view, New Zealand availability for LDW and LKA doesn’t reach ‘mandate ready’ volumes until the mid-to-late 2030s – if at all.”

To align mandates with Japan’s existing model coverage and arrival of ADAS-equipped vehicles in a price range Kiwis are prepared to pay, VIA recommends AEB and LDW become compulsory for used light vehicles from 2035, and LKA from 2037.

COMPLIANCE PATHWAYS

ADAS feature visibility at the sourcing stage is limited and inconsistent, especially for older Japanese vehicles and lower-spec trims. This is a further practical constraint flagged by VIA.

Auction or document fields aren’t standardised, so mandates dependent on pre-purchase confirmation “risk compliance friction, supply loss and price distortion rather than improved safety”.

Wilkerson suggests creating a dual-compliance pathway to reduce supply choke points, with one for when documentation exists to show safety feature compliance and another for performance-based compliance using safety ratings.

“ADAS policy should maximise the rate of safety improvement per dollar of household transport spend by accelerating affordable fleet turnover, not maximising

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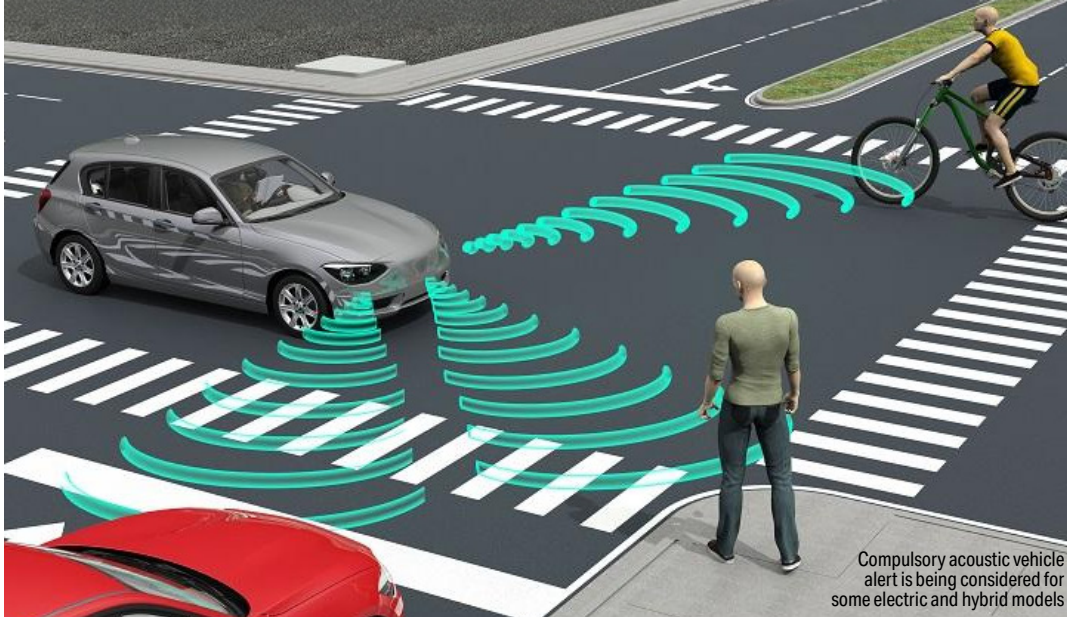


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Compulsory acoustic vehicle alert is being considered for some electric and hybrid models

nominal compliance at the border.”

He also urges any mandates be supported by a clear problem statement, quantified death and serious injury (DSI) reductions by accident type, and a cost-benefit case that tests affordability and supply impacts.

“Mandating specific technologies only makes sense if it targets material contributors to DSI outcomes and if the benefits justify the costs.

“VIA requests the NZTA publishes or references the specific crash problem statement for the ADAS mandate, including which crash types it is designed to prevent, estimated DSI reductions and the cost-benefit case.”

The association supports exemptions from safety mandates for disability and mobility vehicles, and recommends transitional relief for segments disproportionately affected yet essential for households, community services and small to medium enterprises.

It also wants the government to confirm a review of policies in 2030 to reassess ADAS uptake in Japan’s used fleet with particular focus on LDW and LKA availability, pricing effects and verification practicality.

GLOBAL ALIGNMENT

The Motor Industry Association (MIA) wants the government to introduce a “realistic” transition period for making new safety features on imported light vehicles compulsory.

It suggests the coalition should harmonise implementation dates of any new rules with major jurisdictions, particularly Australian Design Rules (ADRs), or adopt later start times.

Aimee Wiley, chief executive, says each new requirement should include a minimum two-year lead-in between introduction dates for new models and then all models. In addition, motorbikes and mopeds should be excluded when international standards don’t exist or are still being developed.

“The MIA and its members have long supported the introduction of modern technologies that align with established international standards. Ensuring New Zealand’s regulatory requirements are consistent with key source markets is essential for certainty, compliance and the timely availability of safe vehicles.”

The MIA says updates to land-transport rules should also explicitly reference the applicable international standards for each safety feature, rather than only providing the high-level descriptions used in last year’s NZTA consultation document.

“Manufacturers rely on certainty and specificity,” explains Wiley. “Clear identification of the minimum required standard for each feature is essential to ensure compliance and support in-service inspection regimes, including confirmation that malfunction indicator lamps operate correctly.”

The MIA notes anti-lock braking systems (ABS) and electronic stability control (ESC) are already mandated here for light

passenger vehicles, so the only action required is to reference the appropriate minimum international standard.

It describes AEB as a highly effective system that’s already widely fitted voluntarily by importers.

The MIA supports mandating AEB for light vehicles, excluding motorcycles, aligned with UN Regulation No 152 (R152) and ADR 98/01, which deems R152 (01 series) technically equivalent.

Core functional requirements under UN R152 include being able to detect imminent forward collisions, provide driver warnings, apply braking automatically to avoid or mitigate accidents, permit driver override at any time and to ensure safe vehicle operation in case of system failure.

Wiley highlights there’s no mandate for emergency lane-keeping systems (ELKS) in Australia, Japan or the US. Europe mandated it under EU 2021/646 from July 2022 with a two-year delay allowed for vehicles equipped with hydraulic power steering.

The MIA’s submission notes Australia consulted on ADR 107/00 (ELKS) in 2025 and proposed implementation dates are November 1, 2027, for new models and a year later for all new vehicles.

“However, Japan is unlikely to mandate ELKS until 2029 or 2031, and US development of a federal

standard remains behind schedule,” adds Wiley.

“The MIA does not believe automatic lane-keep systems, such as those defined in UN R157, are appropriate for mandatory fitment in New Zealand at this time and must be considered as out of scope of this proposal.

“New Zealand should adopt ELKS only when all major source markets have mandated it to avoid disadvantaging consumers through reduced model availability or increased costs. ELKS isn’t applicable to motorcycles.”

Lane-departure warning systems are widely and voluntarily adopted in our light-vehicle imports and the MIA supports mandating such technology for all light vehicles except two-wheelers, if the rule references the correct international standards.

It adds acoustic vehicle-alerting systems (AVAS) are also prevalent overseas for quiet models and backs introducing this for those that operate silently or with minimal propulsion noise. Some hybrids generate sufficient internal combustion noise at low speeds and may not require AVAS.

International standards do not yet include L-category vehicles, so the requirement should exclude motorcycles and mopeds.

Wiley has also provided feedback about mandating safety features for imported heavy vehicles, raising issues similar to those facing light vehicles.

“We are concerned the consultation material doesn’t specify the exact international regulations the NZTA intends to adopt,” she says.

“To support compliance and reduce ambiguity, the MIA expects the land-transport rule to present the required standards for each feature, including applicable series amendments, exemptions and scope definitions.”

The MIA also recommends all introduction dates for heavy-vehicle standards align with, or occur later than, equivalent ADRs with a minimum two-year window between introducing rules for new units and then applying them to all models. ☺

The MIA expects land transport rules to present the required international standards for each feature

– Aimee Wiley

Pains can come with growing

Expansion has become the holy grail for many businesses, but the relentless pursuit of more and greater opportunities also adds pressure to day-to-day management responsibilities.

Todd Hunter, chief executive officer and managing director of Turners Automotive Group, Kimberley Gargiulo, head of SG Fleet NZ, and Chris Lamers, CEO of MTF, have provided insights into how they deal with that.

The three experts, who took part in a panel discussion at the annual conference of the Financial Services Federation (FSF), agree it's not enough to simply be in charge. The sign on the door might proclaim who the boss is or something similar, but leaders all need the same thing to succeed and that's followers.

Lamers says it's all about getting



From left, Kimberley Gargiulo, Todd Hunter and Chris Lamers

the right team around you. "The biggest challenge is remaining focused on the same goals."

That's a message that resonates with Gargiulo. "We've just been through the amalgamation of a New Zealand and international business, and certainly the key thing has been alignment and staying focused on the same goal."

Hunter says Turners has worked to the same model for years.

"It's a praise-based model, good behaviour is recognised and encouraged. Consistent teamwork only comes about with consistent leadership. That's why you'll see us always promoting from within whenever we can."

That ethos is reflected in the executive team where Hunter says the shortest-serving member has seven years with the company, the longest being 20.

A bit of optimism goes a long way too. "You don't have to be Pollyanna. It's okay to recognise tough times and be up front about it. But your core role is as a motivator. Good leaders stay out of the way of good people."

Lamers adds a good dose of resilience to the mix. "It's important to recognise staff have a lot more going on in their lives than work. How do you refill their cups? Sometimes slow is smooth and smooth is fast. You can't constantly push."

Gargiulo agrees. "Culture is set from the top. You must quietly nip bad behaviours in the bud. As the leader, it's your responsibility to eliminate poor behaviour you don't want in the workplace. No one is going to do it for you."

Lamers describes himself as an optimist. "A positive mindset is critical. It's the Ted Lasso thing of belief in the organisation, themselves and their colleagues will take you forward."

That said, it's on expansion

that their philosophies align.

Gargiulo says there's no escaping that growth is important with new private-equity owners, but she agrees with Hunter when he says it can't come at any cost.

"We can all point to companies that have become unstuck when they have been too focused on growth," Gargiulo points out. "Sure, you'd rather grow than shrink. But ultimately it's good staff and customer experiences that drive good outcomes for shareholders."

Lamers is blunter. "Growth is a measure of relevance. If you're shrinking you are becoming less relevant to customers, but growth is also only one of the measures of success. The past 12 months have been tough, a case of doing the right thing to provide stability."

SG Fleet NZ has the added complexity of operating overseas. Gargiulo says: "That's not all bad because we can tap into international business information, yet we are encouraged to think globally but act locally."

Hunter believes expansion must be the aim, but good operators look past profit. Instead, they focus on outcomes and ongoing expectations. "That brings challenges, but it keeps coming back to focus and everyone doing their bit because we're only as good as our people."

Lamers returns to his theme of optimism. "You often hear things like 'if I'm not winning, I'm learning'. However, the flip side is that when you consistently win, you can fail to learn, fail to read the signals or even register the signs. Fighting hard in what's been a tough climate has been a great teacher."

Gargiulo accepts talking positively can lead change. "The truth is growth usually requires change of some sort and fostering the ability to adapt is critical. When people understand the need for change, they are much more likely to accept it and grasp the opportunities it can bring."

Lamers says it's also good to remember not to take too much on ▶



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Current mindsets

Todd Hunter: "Optimism and ambition. Have a plan, stick to it, things will get better."

Chris Lamers: "Find time to relax. Holidays are for relaxing not recovering, but come back ready to face new challenges."

Kimberley Gargiulo: "Have upbeat conversations about the future. Set the expectation that the future is exciting and the potential is there."



Delegates at the FSF's conference on November 6 in Auckland

"We wanted to expand and bought into a second-hand dealer network. This added sites. It also brought a complete clash of cultures.

"It took a massive toll all because of 'white-line fever', that desire to grow, grow, grow when we would have been better to be more circumspect. It was a mistake I'm in no hurry to repeat."

Turners altered its entire strategy of branch expansion off the back of the move. "We really didn't think it through."

Gargiulo believes in good governance. "It will help lead you to

sustainable growth, fit-for-purpose growth that helps avoid those kinds of mistakes."

Lamers agrees. "Some of our board members have viewed the toughness of economic conditions as an opportunity to reset and consolidate, shifting the focus slightly off growth."

Hunter points out the benefits of having a good board. "Relationships are so important. They are a big part of our success, which is partly borne out of an odd mix, almost like a hybrid of family and corporate approaches."

He also credits the ownership

structure of Turners for its success.

"About 30 per cent of shares are held by board members. But the employees also have a big holding through a share scheme, which has helped create a long-term view across the business.

"People ask openly if decisions that will be good in the short term will still look good years into the future."

Gargiulo sums it up. "Growth, balance, sustainability, short term, long term. These are all things that have a lifecycle. It's just about striking a balance but looking to the future." ☺

◀ at once. "It's easy to come up with an idea or strategy, but executing it is entirely different. It's okay to say, 'not now' although it takes discipline."

Hunter believes failure can be a wonderful teacher too, although his biggest came with a sizeable bill and one he regrets having had to pay.



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Clean car rules challenging

Tougher emissions targets and planned reforms of the clean car standard (CCS) were front of mind in issues of Autofile during 2025.

An increase in complaints about dealers, the dwindling number of registered traders, how to encourage EV uptake and additional changes to finance regulations also made the headlines.

Other hot topics included the failure of right-to-repair rules, a shake-up of vocational training and Chinese brands entering the market.

JANUARY: CHARGING REVIEW

The government announced the launch of a review into how public infrastructure for electric cars was to be paid for. It came after plans for a network of 10,000 charging points by 2030 were included in New Zealand's second emissions reduction plan for 2026 to 2030. The coalition said extensive facilities would give consumers the confidence to shift to EVs by tackling range anxiety. The document detailed "our journey towards net zero" and covered other initiatives, such as ensuring the CCS was effective and changes to fuel-excise duty and road-user charges (RUC).



Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, left, and Rick Armstrong, right, at the opening of Lexus East Auckland, Botany, in February

The industry was calling for a flat fee per vehicle to recover the estimated \$5.5 million annual cost of running the CCS. The NZTA was deciding how to structure the fee before introducing it in mid-2025. It expected the charge to be \$18-\$23 per unit. The agency sought views on charging per vehicle or importer, at what stage the fee should be paid and if it should vary depending on the type of vehicle. The Motor Industry Association (MIA) advocated for a flat fee per unit as straightforward and equitable, and urged officials to include it in on-road costs paid by consumers. The Imported Motor Vehicle Industry Association (VIA)

also supported a per-vehicle charge at first registration.

An almost perfect storm of shifting consumer preferences, the economic downturn and regulatory changes shaped trends across all light-vehicle sales categories in 2024, according to the MIA. It reported overall new registrations of 128,828 were down by 13.5 per cent from 148,973 in 2023. When compared with 2022, the decline was 21.8 per cent. Aimee Wiley, chief executive, said the figures highlighted the need for policy stability to support sustained market growth and resilience. "Looking ahead, the primary challenge will be

navigating stricter CCS targets introduced from January 1, 2026, while simultaneously supporting the transition to lower-emissions vehicles."

FEBRUARY: EMISSIONS TESTING

The government was asked to reconsider plans to introduce in-service conformity testing (ISC) for light imports from certain jurisdictions with industry experts concerned it would result in unnecessary regulatory burdens. The draft Land Transport Rule: Vehicle Exhaust Emissions Amendment (No 2) 2024

contained a clause that stated when an approved emissions standard requires ISC testing, the manufacturer is responsible for conducting it. The MIA said the amendment would only apply to certain new models from Europe and the US and would distort market competitiveness. VIA called for the standards from different jurisdictions to be treated as "alternative but equal" – and for "equitable treatment" of Japanese standards that cover approximately half of our fleet.

Pukekohe Kia was recognised by the marque as a "global best" and received a platinum prestige award. It was one of 350 dealerships to

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attain the achievement out of 7,000 franchises worldwide and was the first in New Zealand to do so since 2019. Todd McDonald, managing director of Kia NZ, said: "This award is reserved for the best of the best. We couldn't be prouder of the team at Pukekohe."

Air pollution from vehicles was coming down but their harmful emissions still had a social cost of more than \$10 billion a year. A government report said the fleet reached its largest size ever in 2022 and annual kilometres travelled had increased over recent decades. It added air pollutants from exhaust emissions per kilometre would likely reduce over time, but other non-exhaust air pollution – including from tyre and road wear – would continue to go up.

Brett Gliddon was appointed chief executive of the NZTA, replacing Nicole Rosie. He had been in the role on an acting basis and was group general manager of transport services for the previous five-and-a-half years. Gliddon

started with the agency in 2009 when he became principal project manager.

MARCH: DEALER COMPLAINTS UP

The number of annual complaints about dealers was set to hit its highest level in three years after more than 100 were lodged with the registrar of motor-vehicle traders in seven months. The government reported there were 107 complaints about traders between July 1, 2024, and January 31, 2025, which was one shy of the total for the year to June 30, 2024, and above 70 in 2022/23. Concerns about unregistered trading were the most common problem.

A business consultant warned dealers faced paying millions of dollars in penalty fees under the CCS over coming years. Phill Haynes, of Juno & Jupiter Consulting, forecasted 28 per cent of new light passenger vehicles needed to be fully electric or plug-in hybrids in 2025 if importers were to hit CCS targets. For the used-



Carolyn McMahon started as the first female president of Honda NZ in April

imports sector, he predicted 20 per cent. In 2024, EVs had an 11.2 per cent share of the new-car market and made up 2.2 per cent of used imports. Haynes estimated the new-vehicle industry would have to pay CCS fees of about \$75m in 2025 and the used-imports sector \$40m. He said those totals could rise to \$175m and \$49m respectively by 2027.

Carolyn McMahon made history by being appointed the first female president of Honda NZ. With almost

three decades' experience at Honda Australia, her leadership positions had included vice-president and director. "I'm honoured to take on this role at an exciting time for the industry," she said. McMahon had overseen merging the cars division across the Tasman with Honda Australia MPE – motorcycle, power equipment and marine.

Motorcorp Distributors appointed Ben Montgomery as its GM after Steve Kenchington left the role to become chief executive of the Giltrap Group. Montgomery took charge of the company's 40-strong team and was responsible for eight Jaguar Land Rover franchises in New Zealand. He had worked for Giltrap, which owns Motorcorp, since 2012 and was most recently Volvo NZ's general manager.

APRIL: IMPORT NUMBERS DROP

The annual number of used vehicles imported from Japan tumbled by more than 30,000 in 2024 with the CCS and its cost implications cited

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as a key factor for the downturn. New Zealand was previously the third biggest taker of such stock from Japan, behind the UAE and Russia. However, it was overtaken in 2024 by Mongolia and ended up in fourth spot. Some 81,290 units were imported into this country from Japan in 2024, giving Aotearoa a 5.2 per cent share of the market. This compared with 114,252 and 7.4 per cent in the previous year. Jim Shi, managing director of Autohub NZ, said the reduction could be attributed to domestic economic constraints and regulatory factors, particularly the CCS.

A plan by the coalition to scrap requirements for its agencies to buy zero or low-emitting models came under fire from Drive Electric. It was among changes politicians wanted to make to procurement rules so it would be easier for businesses to win government contracts, which were collectively worth more than \$50b per annum. Drive Electric believed removing requirements to prioritise EVs would undermine



JAC NZ was a new major sponsor of Fieldays in June. The marque's CEO Andrew Crow, pictured right, with Richard Lindroos, of the National Fieldays Society

years of progress. "These changes represent a significant step backward in our transition to a low-carbon transport future," said chair Kirsten Corson.

Armstrong's opened a refurbished dealership in Cambridge Terrace, Wellington, after a multi-stage investment. The revamp of the Porsche facility cost \$14m and took two-and-a-half years to complete. Troy Kennedy, Armstrong's chief executive officer, said: "Wellington has always been a cornerstone of our operations and remains central to our long-term plans. The new showroom and workshop are testament to this commitment."

MAY: FOCUS ON RIGHT TO REPAIR

Politicians were warned a one-size-fits-all approach to right-to-repair rules would be unsuitable for the car industry and could prompt some marques to quit the market. The Motor Trade Association (MTA) said in its submission on the Consumer Guarantees (Right to Repair) Amendment Bill that there should be sector-specific rules instead of the proposed blanket approach to consumer laws. The shake-up sought to require manufacturers to make repair parts and information available to Kiwis to extend the lifetime of products. Lee Marshall, the MTA's chief executive, said the proposals were too simplistic in tackling right-to-repair issues.

Toyota NZ announced the permanent appointment of Tatsuya Ishikawa as CEO. Ishikawa stepped into the role on an acting basis in June 2024 after Neeraj Lala took a leave of absence before resigning the



The car industry paid tribute to Rick Murrell, who died on a fishing trip in July 2025. He was dealer principal at Southland Kia, Invercargill, and a former president of the MTA

following month. In other moves, Mark Young and Andrew Davis joined the board as directors. Young was also named chief risk and value-chain officer, while Davis became chief strategic officer.

The return of work-based training to the automotive industry was hailed as the best outcome for learners and employers. The MTA said it was what the sector had lobbied for after the coalition announced it wanted to scrap Te Pūkenga, the NZ Institute of Skills and Technology. It had been assured that MITO – the training organisation for automotive – would emerge as industry-owned

and led. The MTA said such a move would better enable employers to shape vocational training so it remained current and aligned with business needs.

Chery was planning to enter the New Zealand market with a network of 10 dealerships. They would be in Whangarei, north, central and south Auckland, Pukekohe, Hamilton, Tauranga, Taupo, Lower Hutt and Christchurch. The marque's launch was set for 2025's third quarter as part of its global expansion strategy.

JUNE: TARGETS PROVE TRICKY

VIA was calling for a major rethink of the CCS and warned the current system wasn't allowing importers to meet emissions targets. A key concern was the weight adjustment used to calculate individual targets, which it said incentivised heavier vehicles and penalised lighter, more efficient models. Instead of working out goals for different models, it recommended applying flat

penalties for each gram of carbon dioxide over a set threshold when vehicles are first registered. VIA said unless action was taken, the CCS would exacerbate problems around stock shortages, rising costs and market inefficiencies, and create a more

polluting and ageing fleet.

The government announced it would be introducing a fee of \$22.46 including GST when imported light vehicles were first registered. The charge would apply from July 1 and was designed to recover the costs of administering the CCS, which had been funded by the Beehive since January 2023. An NZTA spokesman said: "We sought feedback. Most submitters supported charging a flat fee per vehicle at registration."

A dealer and finance lender was fined \$115,000 for failing to provide key information to borrowers about loans. El Cheapo Cars,



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[continued from page 10]

which was based in Wellington, was also ordered to pay \$341,931 in compensation to hundreds of customers. It followed the company pleading guilty to seven charges the Commerce Commission filed under the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act (CCCFA).

Simon Rutherford joined Armstrong Motor Group as chief executive officer of its import and distribution operation. He took up the job with Auto Distributors NZ (ADNZ) after an extensive career with Ford, which included eight-and-a-half years as managing director of Ford New Zealand. He also served as president of the MIA from 2022-24. In his new role, Rutherford would oversee all ADNZ brands, including Leapmotor, Smart, Peugeot, Citroen and Opel.

JULY: PLEA TO BOOST EVs

Drive Electric warned the country risked missing out on a \$100b-plus economic opportunity over the next five years unless the government changed its policy settings around EVs and infrastructure. The group outlined key areas to enable the coalition to boost the uptake of low and



The Giltrap Group created NordEast Vehicles in August to represent all six Geely brands. From left, William Zhou and Frank Li, of Zeekr Australia, with Michael Giltrap and Dane Fisher

zero-emissions vehicles, which it said would cut fleet emissions, and provide social, financial and green benefits. It delivered a briefing to ministers noting New Zealand's EV market share had declined after the repeal of the clean car discount, introduction of RUC, changes to ACC levies and weakening of the CCS. "New EV registrations dropped from 27 per cent [of new-car sales] in 2023 to 5.3 per cent in 2024," it reported. "EVs comprise less than one per cent of the total fleet."

Biosecurity NZ was reviewing the vehicles, machinery and parts import health standard after brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB) detections declined in the previous high-risk season.

Potential changes included updating the list of countries required to treat goods for the insect. The action came after a relatively quiet high-risk season with 38 live detections between September 1, 2024, and April 30, 2025, compared with 111 in 2023/24. The number of dead BMSBs found increased from 1,222 to 1,265.

The ex-director of an importing business was ordered to pay more than \$1m after it fell into liquidation. Yujiro Fujisawa formed Wellington-based Callin Auto NZ in 2012 and proceedings to wind it up began in 2022. Liquidators said it was "loss-making except for one year" because it didn't sell cars with enough margin to cover its costs. They took high-court action against him. At a hearing, Justice Johnstone said Fujisawa had run the business in a way likely to create a substantial risk of loss to creditors. He was ordered to pay the liquidators \$1,013,774 plus costs and interest.

Importers of new and used light vehicles faced the prospect of having to meet extra criteria under sweeping reforms touted by the government. Chris Bishop, the Minister of Transport, outlined a raft of proposed changes to land-transport rules that he wanted to introduce over the next 18 months. These included tougher safety standards for imports. Autonomous emergency braking and lane-keeping systems were cited as among the technologies that could become mandatory. The government also planned to review the frequency and requirements of warrant of fitness (WOF) and certificate of fitness (COF) inspections for new and used light vehicles.

AUGUST: EXTRA LOAN REFORMS

Finance providers and car dealers were hoping "necessary and welcome" reforms of lending laws would bring a period of consolidation for the industry following numerous changes over the past decade. Further amendments to the CCCFA had been put forward by the government, including transferring regulatory responsibility for credit contracts and consumer finance from the Commerce Commission to the Financial Markets Authority (FMA), and transitioning creditors and mobile traders to a new licensing regime. The proposals were part of a reform package of three bills. The Financial Services Federation (FSF) called for the changes to be the last for some time to avoid its members incurring extra costs and allow them to focus on putting more resources into developing products.

Demand for used vehicles was expected to increase in 2025 as the industry emerged from a "grim" period for sales. That was the prediction of Greg Hedgepeth, chief executive of Turners Automotive Retail, as the company expanded across the country and announced plans to open at least one new branch a year over the next five years. Supporting that action were three new sites opening in Christchurch in 2025 to replace Turners' previous facility in Detroit Place, which was closed after 20 years.

The NZTA suspended access to names and addresses on the motor-vehicle register for parties failing to comply with annual reporting requirements. It had targeted members of organisations non-compliant under section 241 of the Land Transport Act

Crossover comes top

The Toyota RAV4 was the country's best-selling new model of 2025 with 11,295 registrations to usurp Ford's Ranger by 1,614.

Overall, there were 97,987 new cars registered last year. That was up by 12.3 per cent from 87,285 in 2024, while 39,866 new commercials amounted to a drop of 3.7 per cent from 41,384.

Mitsubishi's ASX was the second-placed new car on 4,970 units and its Outlander was third

with 4,309. Next up were Ford's Everest on 3,324 and Toyota's Yaris Cross with 2,018.

The Ranger was the leading commercial with 9,681 units. Next up were Toyota's Hilux on 8,152, Mitsubishi's Triton with 3,279, Nissan's Navara on 2,500 and the Hiace with 2,064.

When it came to marques, Toyota topped the ladder for new cars with 22,402 registrations. Mitsubishi was second with 10,815 and Kia third on 8,597. Suzuki with 4,925 and Mazda with 4,920 made up the top five.

Ford was the most popular brand for new commercials with 10,983 sales.

Next up were Toyota with 10,617, Mitsubishi on 3,280, Nissan on 2,500 and BYD with 1,882.



◀ and halted their access when appropriate. It had spent six months engaging with industry bodies over business owners not meeting their 2024 annual reporting requirements. Those who failed to submit any type of report were given a final opportunity by the agency to complete a compliance declaration form before their authorisations were suspended.

SEPTEMBER: STANDARD SHAKE-UP

Organisations representing the industry broadly welcomed coalition proposals to revamp the CCS and make its approach to cutting emissions fairer. The plans included scrapping the weight-adjustment system for cars and light commercials entering the fleet. In addition, carbon credits would be allowed to be traded between the used imports and new-vehicle sectors to create more flexibility for importers. The lifespan of credits would be extended from three to four years so businesses

could benefit from more certainty when managing compliance. The proposals in the Land Transport (Clean Vehicle Standard) Amendment Bill (No 2) had been long-awaited.

The popularity of low and zero-emissions models faced possible disruption as the government pressed ahead with plans to introduce electronic RUC for all light vehicles. Industry bodies largely welcomed proposals to transition the fleet to a new system over coming years. The overhaul would have significant impacts for the industry, consumers and motorists, according to the MIA's Aimee Wiley. "We agree with the Minister of Transport when he states this is the biggest change in 50 years to how the roading network is funded," she said. "The MIA also believes this is the single biggest change for all Kiwis because it will impact every light vehicle in New Zealand."

The Giltrap Group created a new division, NordEast Vehicle



debut here. NordEast's goal was to deliver 5,000 fully electrified vehicles within three years.



Dongfeng appointed Armstrong's as its distributor for New Zealand in October. Its initial line-up was to include, from top, the 007, Vigo and Box

Distributors, to represent all six Geely Group brands on our shores. It was the first time globally the marques – Geely, Farizon, Lotus, Polestar, Volvo and Zeekr – had come under one distributor.

The announcement followed news Zeekr was to soon make its

OCTOBER: DEALERS TOTAL DIPS

The number of registered motor-vehicle dealers fell to a 13-year low amid trading conditions many in the sector described as among the toughest the market has experienced. Chris Stephenson, of Enterprise Motor Group, said: "The CCS in its current form is going to make it harder for us to source vehicles at prices people will be able to pay." At the end of September, there were 2,591 dealers on the motor-vehicle traders register, which was the lowest since June 2012 when the total was 2,605. Dealer numbers had been in general decline since peaking at 3,535 in November 2017 and hadn't topped 3,000 in the past three years.

A used-car dealership in south Auckland owed creditors more than \$4.7m. Rising operating costs

[continued on page 14]

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and competition were 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 said issues had included an inability to recover costs, liabilities from guarantees and challenging economic conditions. Secured creditors included Westpac NZ, which claimed it was owed \$3.2m across the three companies.

The CCS was described as “no longer fit for purpose” with calls for it to be overhauled or replaced with more effective and equitable alternatives. Concerns were raised by the industry that it potentially impeded efforts to reduce transport emissions, would distort the supply of stock to New Zealand, and threaten the future of businesses in the new and used-imports sectors. The comments came in submissions to the government about its plans to make changes to the CCS. James McDowall, the MTA’s head of advocacy, said members had faced major disruption in recent times because of frequent regulatory changes and the industry was in a “highly vulnerable state”.

The number of vehicles crossing the border via Auckland fell to their lowest level since 2013 after the port handled 172,000 units in its 2025 financial year. The total was down by 17 per cent from 2023/24. In line with market conditions, volumes from roll-on, roll-off (ro-ro) vessels declined by 27 per cent, coming



There was plenty of fun at the FSF’s awards night in November at MOTAT, Auckland

in below budget. On the flipside, trans-shipments increased. Port of Auckland Ltd said it had strengthened its vehicle-handling capabilities by expanding capacity and enabling three ro-ro ships to berth at the same time by utilising Jellicoe Wharf.

NOVEMBER: LIQUIDATION RISKS

Dealers who owned their premises and larger groups had the best staying power as the overall number of traders across the new and used markets dropped. That was the view of Larry Fallowfield, the MTA’s sector manager for dealers, who said weaker sales had affected the number of registered traders. “It’s fair to say we all thought the theory was let’s survive to ‘25, but it’s let’s survive through ‘25.”

The coalition said lending reforms would make it simpler for people to access credit. A select committee recommended the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Amendment Bill, which would affect providers of car loans and their agents, be passed by parliament. It was introduced in March and would shift lenders from certification to a licensing

regime and remove parts of the CCCFA that don’t align with the new regulatory approach.

The MTA described government proposals to overhaul WOFs as “timely”. Lee Marshall, chief executive, said changing the regime had been on the industry’s agenda for years. Under the plans, the first WOF for new light vehicles would be issued for four years, those aged four to 10 would have to be inspected every two years and vehicles over 10 years would have an annual check. The scope of WOF and COF A inspections was set to be amended and new safety requirements, such as automatic emergency braking, were being considered for fresh imports. VIA said implementation timelines for entry-certification changes should reflect our market, and production and compliance schedules in Japan.

The Giltrap Group raised \$232,000 for a children’s hospital after its third Starship Supercar Show in Auckland attracted more than 8,000 enthusiasts. Money was raised for the Starship Foundation through ticket sales and a charity auction, with 2025’s tally bringing the total collected since 2021 to more than \$635,000.

DECEMBER: LENDING CHANGES

The Commerce Commission advised those in the vehicle-finance space at the FSF’s annual conference that it would be business as usual until oversight of their operations were shifted. Responsibility was set to transfer to the FMA under the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Amendment Bill.

Recycling more car parts was on the agenda in a bid to build on Tyrewise’s success. The country’s first regulated product stewardship scheme collected nearly 4.5 million old tyres in its first year. Auto Stewardship NZ, the governance organisation for Tyrewise, said it wanted to create a circular economy for all vehicle components.

Taking two years to implement, a new-look CCS was hailed by the MIA as a sensible way to revamp the scheme it said was costing New Zealand hundreds of millions of dollars without cutting emissions. The coalition passed legislation to slash fees for new and used imports by about 80 per cent for 2026 and 2027, and pledged to complete a full review of the CCS by June 2026. ☺

Marque lands hat-trick

Toyota took out the top three spots for used-imported cars in 2025 as the sector shrank for the second consecutive year.

There were 85,031 used passenger vehicles registered here for the first time, which was down by 13 per cent from 97,688 in 2024.

The Aqua, pictured, came in at number one on 9,010 units and a 10.6 per cent share of the market.

This compared with 9,740 units and 10 per cent in 2024.

Next up was the Prius on 6,122 sales. The Corolla was third with 4,312. Nissan’s Note and Mazda Axela’s completed the top five with 3,605 and 3,340 respectively.

Toyota was again the best-selling marque with 31,851 sales of used-imported cars and a market share of 37.5 per cent.

Nissan was second and Mazda third, so this top three has been the same for the past four years. The former had 11,894 registrations, the latter 11,710.

There were 1,265 Toyota Hiaces sold for 30.4 per cent of 2025 used commercials market. Those figures were down from 2,292 and 37.6 per cent in 2024. Two Nissans came second and third – the NV350 on 249 and NV200 with 232.

Overall, there were 4,157 used commercials registered in New Zealand last year versus 6,103 in 2024 for a drop of 31.9 per cent. Toyota was 2025’s top marque with 1,709. Nissan was second on 792, followed by Ford with 268.





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Barry Grouby Motors' Clayton Road yard before it closed in 2025



Time called after 60 years

There were once dozens of used-vehicle dealerships in Rotorua but only a handful remain.

Now a family-run business, which traded for more than six decades, has become the latest to exit the market there.

Barry Grouby Motors was launched in 1963 and operated from several premises over the years, including a spell in Pukaki Street from 1966 to 1973.

The business was founded by Barry Grouby Snr, who started his career in the automotive industry in 1948 while living in Wellington before moving to Rotorua where he set up his own dealership.

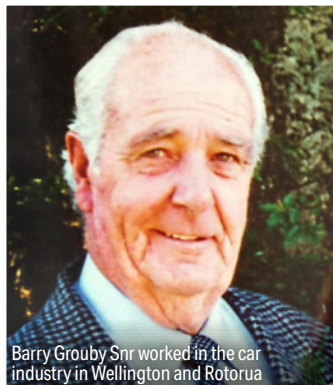
One of his sons, Barry Grouby, continued the family tradition of selling vehicles. He took over the reins of the eponymous business in 2005 and moved to a yard on Clayton Road.

The dealership shut for good late last year with the younger Grouby, who ran the company with his wife Sharryn, citing difficult economic times as one of the reasons for closing.

"We decided to walk away while we still had some buttons on our shirt and without owing people anything because we read all those horror stories of other dealers around the country closing up and owing rent," he told Autofile.

"If I had stayed there for another month, I would have been pouring more money down the gurgler. But we owned all the stock and took home the cars that were left to sell them.

"Since 2005, the overheads on our yard tripled and there was nothing I could cut to make it any cheaper because you need your



Barry Grouby Snr worked in the car industry in Wellington and Rotorua



The site in Pukaki Street, Rotorua, operated from 1966 to 1973



dealer system and you need to advertise cars.

"With the cost of living and cost of everything else these days, running a dealership is hard. Talking to other people from industries involved with us, such as tyre fitters and auto electricians, everyone's in the same boat and thinking of doing the same thing."

Grouby says his father, who passed away in 2016, was in the automotive business from an early age and had a motorcycle retail shop in Miramar, Wellington. It was called Airport Motors.

Grouby Snr ran his own yard for several years after moving to Rotorua before he and his wife separated, leaving him to raise three children as a solo dad.

As a result, he stepped back from the industry for a while before starting a valet shop from home and later joining Ken Cumner Motors as a salesman before branching out on his own again.

The younger Grouby followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a licensed motor-vehicle dealer and starting to sell cars in Rotorua from around 1990.

"I worked for a dealer called Geoff Kenny, who is now a board member at MTF, and I worked with him for a number of years," recalls Grouby. "I think it was kind of in my blood to be in the car business.

"I also did a stint in the UK in 1999 selling used imports. But it wasn't the same as New Zealand because it was a much longer process getting cars from Japan so that business didn't take off as much as we had hoped.

"It was a good experience though and I then started my own yard in 2005. I'm sad it has closed because it's done me really well.

"I rented my yard off a local family for the past 20 years and they've been so good to me. I've enjoyed the industry, it's been a lot of fun and there have been some

hilarious moments over the years."

Some of the fun appears to have disappeared from the sector with many dealers "a little bit on edge" as they increasingly battle each other to secure vehicles with import numbers being down.

Grouby has seen plenty of changes during his time in the industry, and says Rotorua had a peak of more than 40 used-car dealers in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

The number of dealerships, particularly small car yards like his, has fallen since and family businesses especially appear to be struggling to survive.

"Having lots of those small car dealers is an era gone by. If you own the premises and are living on the land then it might be a bit easier, but these are sad times for traders.

"Everything has slowed up. It's taking longer to get paint and panel work done, it's taking longer ▶



Barry Grouby took over the business in Pukaki Street, Rotorua, from his father in 2005

◀ to get cars complied. You're not getting sales out as quick and it makes things harder.

"Saying that, I've enjoyed my time and it's been good to my family. I've got three boys and they have all got good jobs, but not in the car market. It's the end of an era for Barry Grouby Motors."

He recalls how the arrival of imported vehicles en masse from Japan changed the industry, even if many consumers showed initial reluctance towards those cars.

"There were people who wouldn't touch Japanese imports and only wanted New Zealand-new. I came up against that a lot as a young salesman but, as time went on, it was no longer an issue.

"As more and more of those imports came onto our roads, the better they got and they really have done people quite well and given them a great choice of vehicles."

The push for more hybrids and EVs has also been a significant market shift in Grouby's time and he adds

the government's regulation changes of recent years have turned the industry on its head.

"New Zealand is a recreational country where we tow boats, caravans and trailers, and people go hunting in four-wheel drives, but the EV market isn't really catering for them.

"I think we're going to see a lot

more older cars stay on the road and prices for older vehicles will start to climb because people still want recreational vehicles to do the stuff they want to do.

"I stopped importing years ago. I never got involved with the clean-car schemes and just stuck with second-time around vehicles, which we were buying off other dealers. Everybody is doing that now.

"It's the only way to buy cars if you're not importing but you've got to pay top dollar for good, clean cars and you've got to hunt for them.

"The cost of living also means a new car is probably the last thing on a shopping list for many people. The compulsive buyers you used to see back in the day, I haven't seen one of those probably in about two years. Everybody just buys a car as a necessity now."

Grouby is unsure what his new career will be, but he intends to do "something completely away from the motor-vehicle industry. It's been great but it's time for a change".

When he shut up shop last year, he still had "a bit of stock here so will likely do a bit of wheeling and dealing on Trade Me and hold on to my licence for a while".

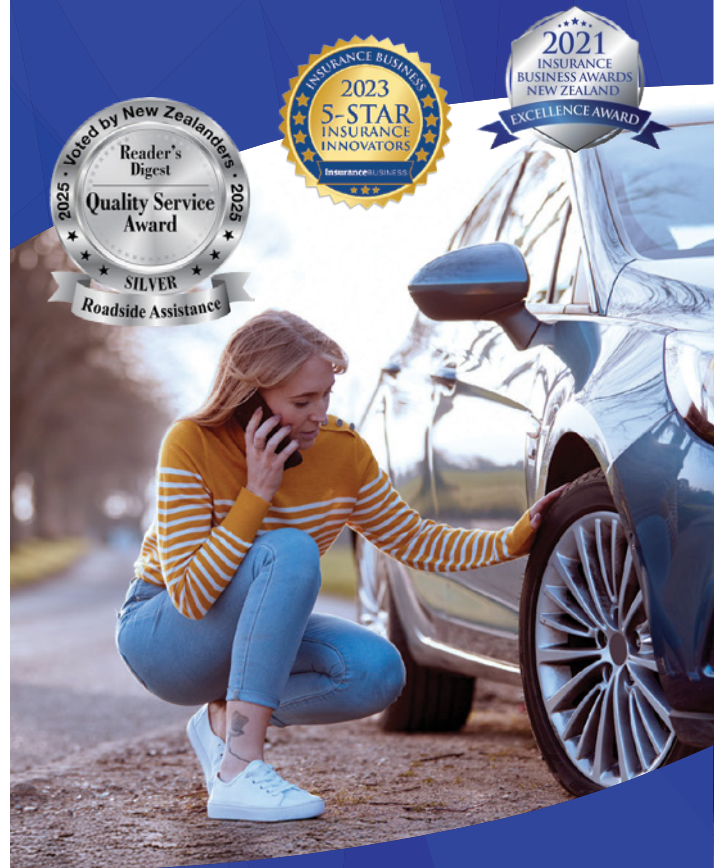
"I was a little bit apprehensive about the decision having been here this long. But I didn't want to stay here pouring money down the gurgler." ☺



I've enjoyed the industry, it's been a lot of fun

– Barry Grouby

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Looks like you survived in 2025

As we slide into 2026 with tyres barely gripping, let's glance in the rear-view mirror at what was last year's wild ride through car-dealer world.

Buckle up because if you're reading this, congratulations, you made it. Sadly, more than 100 registered traders didn't as they have taken the off-ramp into the liquidation car park.

Back in February, my Autofile article was ambitiously headlined "innovation to boost vehicle sales". At the time, I was feeling optimistic and maybe too optimistic as I predicted brighter days ahead.

And spoiler alert, I wasn't entirely wrong, but I wasn't entirely right either. My crystal ball confidently declared: "As interest rates ease, consumer confidence will bounce back and sales will recover – gradually."

Turns out, "gradual" was like watching paint dry for some sectors. In fact, the used-imports market ran out of optimism faster than a V8 Supercar driver on the barrier at the bottom of Mount Panorama's Conrod Straight.

OFF WITH SPEED BUMP

Last year kicked off with talks on the motor-vehicle register (MVR) and section 241 regarding access and annual reporting. Thrilling stuff, right, but these conversations mattered.

We also saw early engagement on safety reforms. That's what we now know as new requirements for cars entering our fleet. These proposals include the likes of automatic emergency braking, lane-keep assist, and acoustic vehicle-alert systems for battery electric models and hybrids.

GLIMMER OF PROGRESS

February brought a show of unity as the MTA, Financial Services Federation, Insurance Council and Motor Industry Association to name a few all sat in the same room as NZTA staff with the main goal of simplifying the annual reporting process for MVR access.

Thanks to strong industry and member feedback, along with continued discussions and constructive exchanges of views, the agency introduced the 2025 declaration form. This is a far more pragmatic approach to reviewing access requirements.

While this year's process may have seemed more demanding for dealers compared with 2024's annual reporting, several significant gaps became obvious with the previous system. That was particularly the case around preventable privacy breaches that occurred simply because correct



LARRY FALLOWFIELD
Sector manager - dealers,
Motor Trade Association

procedures weren't followed or fully understood.

It's a timely reminder that everyone needs to strengthen MVR processes and tighten security in 2026 because no business wants to be

the next one making headlines for the wrong reasons.

RIGHT TO REPAIR (NOT)

March saw a member's bill reach parliament. The idea behind the Consumer Guarantees (Right To Repair) Amendment Bill was noble, and that was for importers and suppliers to have to provide repair information and parts.

However, comparing a \$10 toaster to a \$40,000 car was like saying a pushbike and Porsche share the same parts list and maintenance plan. It was very hard to support legislation that wouldn't achieve its desired result.

The proposals were dismissed by the house after the politician turned up late for the second reading of her bill. It's a hard lesson, but one must always be on time, especially if it's critical. Or was it not that critical in the first place?

That bill shouldn't be confused with a more automotive focused right-to-repair bill still sitting in the

parliamentary ballot, or "biscuit tin", waiting to be selected for debate.

Come May, I was feeling brave and predicted Toyota's RAV4 would dethrone the Ranger as New Zealand's bestselling model after Ford's decade of dominance.

BREATH OF FRESH AIR

September brought the Clean Vehicle Standard Amendment Bill (No 2) back into the spotlight. The headlines are now well behind us with carbon-dioxide charges dropping by about 80 per cent from January 1.

Importers breathed a sigh of relief at a time when the economy was starting to move into second gear. The previous 2026 regulated policy change could have sent us into reverse with no substantial environmental benefits.

As for December, that was a sprint to the finishing line for the MTA's advocacy team, filing submissions for new safety requirements for entrants to our fleet, the heavy-vehicle productivity rule reform and light-vehicle inspections regulations.

Last year tested resilience, patience and maybe even our sense of humour. To those who survived, hats off to you. Will 2026 be easy? No, but after 2025 the automotive industry can handle a few Conrod Straight mishaps. ☺



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The next 12 months will reward those who act with speed, precision and creativity.

THE 15-MINUTE RULE

Every digital enquiry, whether from Meta, Google, your website or a third-party marketplace, should be treated like a customer in your showroom.

A 15-minute rule across all platforms isn't just best practice, it's an advantage. Response time directly links to conversion rates. Leads waiting for more than 30 minutes often go cold and have probably gone to another dealer.

Audit your processes to see how long it takes for leads to get a human response. If the answer is "it depends", that's a cue to tighten them up because the fastest wins the lead and often the sale.

USE AI TO PRIORITISE

Not all leads are equal. AI-driven lead-scoring helps dealerships

identify which show strong buying intent, such as those who have viewed finance pages or returned multiple times to specific listings.

By integrating AI lead-scoring into customer relationship management (CRM) or marketing automation platforms, salespeople can focus first on high-value leads while nurturing lower-intent ones automatically.

This doesn't replace intuition, it enhances it. Think of it as giving your team a cheat sheet for who to call first.

STAND OUT CREATIVELY

In crowded social feeds, basic static images won't cut it. Rich media formats, such as interactive carousels, 360-degree spins and short-form video, spark interest.

AI video tools now allow you to produce branded adverts of professional quality in minutes, not days.

Combine this with dynamic creative – when offers, models and headlines automatically adjust to each viewer – and you're suddenly running the kind of personalised



JAMES HENDRY
Director, sales and operations
AdTorque Edge NZ

campaigns major companies use, but at dealership level.

PROFILE YOUR IDEAL CLIENT

Performance starts with clarity. Who is your most profitable buyer? What do they drive, how do they buy and where do they spend time online?

Defining your ideal customer profile helps you stop paying to reach everyone and start investing to reach the right ones.

Once you've defined this audience, set your campaign targeting to match. Then go further by uploading your CRM data into Google and Meta to create customised audiences. These platforms can then find "lookalike" customers who share the same characteristics as your existing best ones.

When you compare how these segments perform against local benchmarks for cost per lead and conversion, the insights are often eye-opening.

TRACK WHAT'S SELLING

If you aren't tracking beyond website metrics, you're missing the

full story. Track every sale and call back to its true source.

Most dealers are tracking the quantity of website leads and calls, but few track their origins back to source, such as paid Google, social, display, video and so on.

Understanding which channels generate real sales, versus those that simply drive clicks, helps you allocate budget where it matters the most.

KEEP OFFERS FRESH

It sounds simple, but too many websites show expired offers or are missing them altogether. If your digital ads are promoting a new-year finance deal, your site should match that messaging.

Are offers on your inventory, for example, displayed prominently on your listings? Consistency builds trust and trust converts.

Dealers don't need to reinvent the wheel to improve return on investment. Respond fast, prioritise smartly, create differently, target precisely, track what matters and always keep your offers up to date. Those who master these fundamentals won't just generate more leads, they will generate extra sales more efficiently and ahead of competitors. ☺



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Industry movers

DAVID COLUSSO has been appointed managing director of distribution for Inchcape Australasia to lead OEM engagement and strategic partnerships on both sides of the Tasman. He has extensive experience as a finance director and is also MD of operations in his new role.



David Colusso

Colusso played a pivotal role in securing distributorships with Deepal and Foton in Australia, and has been instrumental in expanding Inchcape's footprint in New Zealand. "His understanding of retail operations and brand stewardship positions him to drive distribution excellence," says Blair Read, managing director of Inchcape Australasia.



Kym Mellow

KYM MELLOW has become managing director of operations for Inchcape Australasia. He is focusing on network development, strategic partner growth, and the optimisation of value-added services in finance and insurance, logistics and fulfilment.



Jerry Delaney

Read notes: "This appointment is a testament of Kym's leadership in transforming Inchcape NZ during his recent secondment."

JERRY DELANEY has been promoted to general manager of New Zealand. His priorities include enhancing network capabilities, and OEM and partner engagement.



Darren Morgan

As former head of distribution, he contributed to market-share growth for the business and is also now as member of the Australasian executive leadership team.

DARREN MORGAN has become general manager of Inchcape Logistics and leads Autonexus' operations to deliver solutions to support the company's strategic partners. He has a background in service operations and OEM relationship management.

LUKE McCARTIE has been promoted to general manager of the Grey Lynn branch of Auckland City Toyota. He has been with the company for 13 years after starting as a sales representative in 2012 and becoming used-vehicle sales manager in 2017.



McCartie's previous sales roles have included spending a year at Winger Motors from May 2011 and working at Albany Toyota for nearly three-and-a-half years before that.

He's thrilled about his latest role and aims "to build great teams, deliver exceptional results and make Auckland City Toyota Grey Lynn the benchmark for excellence".

CHRISTINA TWELFTREE has joined Ford Australia and New Zealand to replace communications director Matt Moran, who has taken on a role in Bangkok.



Twelftree joined the blue oval in Shanghai in 2016 as part of the brand communications team.

In late 2018, she shifted to the US where her responsibilities included working on the Michigan Central Station project – a new mobility hub for Ford Motor Company.

For the past few years, she has been the CEO of the communications and investor relations teams. Twelftree is now responsible for all aspects of communications on both sides of the Tasman.

Chinese brands take out top two in survey

Marques from China have usurped their rivals to secure the top two spots in rankings based on feedback from franchises in New Zealand.

The dealer-distributor relationship index (DDRI) is conducted by the Motor Trade Association (MTA) each year with questions sent out to about 500 businesses in October.

The views of 260 respondents have been compiled into a report, which has now been shared with participants and circulated to importers via the Motor Industry Association.

Larry Fallowfield, the MTA's sector manager for dealers, says 2025 brought "quite the shuffle" in the rankings of marques.

"In 2024, a Japanese brand led the pack, another sat in fourth, two Europeans filled second and third, a Chinese brand rounded out fifth and another Chinese contender bottom," he adds.

"Fast forward to 2025 and the podium looked different. Two Chinese brands took gold and silver, with two Japanese close behind in third and fourth, and a European hanging on to fifth. At the other end, a US brand took last place with one of the lowest scores we've ever recorded.

"Maybe it's a sign of shifting dynamics, growing Chinese influence and the competitive pressure facing global players, but the race is on and the track is changing."

The survey has become a foundation for understanding and improving dealer-distributor relationships, and its report aims to provide independent, actionable insights to strengthen collaboration between distributors and dealers.

The 2025 survey attracted 261 responses from light-vehicle dealerships, a 20 per cent jump on 2024 to beat the previous record of 253 in 2022.

One of the DDRI's key principles

is confidentiality. As a result, individual responses are never shared and results are aggregated to ensure anonymity.

Questionnaires were also sent to businesses selling heavy commercials, motorcycles and scooters. When including these, total responses came to 292.

"To strengthen participation and data reliability, information was powered by Autofile's Dealer Directory, providing access to an extensive network," adds Fallowfield.

"This approach enhanced reach and improved the accuracy of reporting, ensuring the DDRI reflects a broad view of the industry."

Changes in last year's survey included seven new questions, three being reworded for clarity and a category on advanced driver-assist systems for the first time.

Twenty-three brands met the required response rate for inclusion in the final report, with five achieving more than 70 per cent participation while 11 marques fell below the cut-off and were not represented.

Fallowfield hopes the survey response rate will increase in 2026 and lead to the production of the 20th DDRI report for light vehicles, and the first ones for heavy commercials and two-wheelers.

"The MTA conducts this survey as an independent service to the industry, and receivers of the report cannot use its contents for external marketing, media or on social platforms. What happens in the DDRI stays in the DDRI.

"With record participation and expanded question sets, the 2025 survey offers deeper insights into industry trends and priorities.

"As the automotive landscape shifts towards advanced technologies and evolving consumer expectations, tools such as the DDRI will remain essential for fostering collaboration and driving continuous improvement." ☺

Confidence gently returns to market

It's clear 2025 was a year defined by adjustment, resilience and the early stages of recovery with the new-vehicle sector operating against a backdrop of subdued economic conditions, careful household spending and tightening business investment.

Despite these challenges, the market has shown an encouraging ability to stabilise and, in the second half, some momentum started.

The first quarter of 2025 was marked by softness, as expected. January and February's results reflected a market recalibrating after several years of policy-driven fluctuations. Light commercial volumes were constrained as businesses deferred fleet replacement and focused on maximising existing assets.

At the same time, there was a demand shift. SUVs strengthened their dominance, hybrids gained traction and while battery electric vehicles (BEVs) remained part of the mix, uptake was still below the level needed to track towards strengthened CO2 targets.

March and April reinforced these themes. Light passenger demand remained comparatively steady, supported by private buyers prioritising fuel efficiency and cost of ownership. In contrast, heavy commercial registrations were significantly lower than a year earlier with freight and construction still under pressure. This caution was logical but delayed the renewal of older vehicles and slowed emissions and safety progress.

May marked the first sign conditions were set to shift. While

softer on a year-to-date basis, sales lifted slightly above the same month in 2024. For many in the sector, this raised the question of whether we were seeing an early turning point or brief stabilisation.

June provided a clearer answer. The government's Investment Boost initiative, signalled in May's budget, appeared to influence business and rental purchases. This month delivered a 26 per cent increase in new registrations compared with the previous year with gains across the light passenger and commercial segments. BEV uptake improved significantly, reaching its highest point since the clean car discount ended in 2023. This reinforced that when policy settings are consistent and supportive, buyers respond.

The upward trajectory then became more pronounced with July, August and September recording year-on-year growth, giving the industry renewed confidence after prolonged subdued activity. September was strong, driven largely by a surge in light passenger and renewed rental demand. Business purchasing also strengthened, reflecting Investment Boost's impact.

However, it would be simplistic to characterise this recovery as EV-led. The reality in 2025 was more nuanced. Hybrids were the most consistent growth story. Households and fleets gravitated towards their practicality, fuel savings and accessibility. Plug-



AIMEE WILEY
Chief executive officer,
Motor Industry Association

in hybrids gained momentum off a smaller base.

By contrast, BEV demand was variable, strong during certain months but dampened by cost sensitivity, charging considerations and economic caution.

New Zealand's diverse economy and geography shape a wide range of needs with many vehicles serving business and personal use across a dispersed population. With around 850 light vehicles per 1,000 people, we have one of the world's highest per-capita ownership rates.

Consumer choices are influenced by driving patterns, vehicle capability requirements, infrastructure availability and affordability. Emissions outcomes are balanced against practicality, confidence and cost of ownership.

Experience shows Kiwis are willing to shift to lower emissions models but in ways reflecting their budgets, lifestyles and needs. This reinforces the importance of maintaining a broad mix of low-emissions technologies across the fleet as a single-track approach risks limiting choice and slowing adoption, particularly when new options introduce extra cost, inconvenience or complexity.

The final quarter of 2025 solidified the theme of gradual stabilisation. October and November were the fourth and fifth consecutive months of year-on-year growth. Hybrids

dominated car demand, business purchasing held firm and rental activity strengthened as regional and tourism-related travel remained resilient. Heavy commercial volumes continued to lag, reflecting ongoing softness in construction and freight, but even here we saw early interest in lower-emissions technologies.

Looking back across the year, several themes stand out. First, certainty and affordability remain key drivers of fleet renewal. When households and businesses feel confident, financially and in long-term policy settings, they are prepared to invest.

Second, the transition is progressing, but unevenly. Hybrids are providing an essential bridge, while EVs remain important but not the sole pathway forward.

Third, timely fleet renewal is central to achieving our safety and environmental goals. Delays slow progress, while stable policy settings help accelerate it.

Industry resilience was evident in 2025. Distributors and dealers adapted to shifting demand, evolving technology and uncertain economic conditions. Commitment to investment, innovation and customer support has positioned the sector well.

We're not yet in a full growth cycle and challenges remain. But progress made last year gives us confidence. With consistent policy, improving economic conditions and continued collaboration across the sector, we can build on this momentum to support the industry and New Zealand's wider transition objectives. ☺



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The month that was... January

January 18, 1999

Crackdown on dealers planned

Traders were warned by the Commerce Commission they would face increased scrutiny in 1999.

The regulator had identified dealers as a key group flouting the Commerce Act and Fair Trading Act. It said it continuously received complaints about traders and had already taken enforcement action against a cross-section of the industry.

In 1998, seven Toyota dealers in Auckland were fined \$50,000 each while action was continuing against another with the matter already having gone as high as the Privy Council in London.

Toyota NZ had also fallen foul of the commission, copping a \$250,000 fine plus \$10,000 in costs. In addition, the regulator had court action pending against Caltex, Mobil, Shell and Fletcher Challenge Energy.

The Motor Vehicle Dealers' Institute (MVDI) had banded together with the commission and Ministry of Consumer Affairs to educate rather than discipline dealers into complying with the relevant regulations.

Executive director, Steve Downes, said the strategy was to use an olive branch rather than a big stick.

The plan was the commission would pass onto the MVDI the names of its members who appeared – by the number of complaints received – not to be complying. The institute would then follow up with those who kept cropping up regularly.

When trends were identified, the MVDI would then hold seminars and publish articles in its magazine to educate dealers.



January 24, 2000

F&I profits escalate

Sales of finance and insurance (F&I) products, and warranties, were making record contributions to dealerships' bottom lines.

Autosure reported its traders achieved record profits per retail unit sold in December 1999. All were confident this part of their business would continue to substantially boost overall profitability.

Steve Owens, general manager, said the reason Autosure's dealers had improved the profitability of this area of their operations was because they realised F&I could be a major part of their business. "Our training system helps them focus on this sector and make it work."

He added that finance companies were not lending all that much more money. It was the results traders were achieving with this finance that had improved as far as Autosure's clients were concerned.

Owens said: "Some of our dealers who were not making much money from sector can't believe what an important part of the profitability of their business this it has become."

Wayne Croad, of Protecta Insurance, said his company was "run off its feet" with increased demands from its traders for F&I information.



January 12, 2007

Toyota tops again

Toyota dominated sales in the New Zealand market during 2006 by taking out top overall new vehicle sales, new car sales and new commercial sales. It was also the best-selling brand for used-imported cars and commercials.

The only two main prizes the Japanese marque didn't win were most popular new-car model, which was Holden's Commodore but only by 79 units from the Corolla, while the number-one used import was Subaru's Legacy.

Sales of new vehicles in 2006 were down by 3.4 per cent compared to 2005 with new cars decreasing by seven per cent. But the big fall came in used imports, which tumbled by 18.5 per cent.

Overall, the total number of "new" vehicles in 2006 – that's to say New Zealand-new sales and first-time registrations of used imports – was down by 12.7 per cent from 269,914 in the year before to 235,601.



January 29, 2010

Hyundai is hiring

If you were looking to move on from your current dealership, you might have been pleased to hear Hyundai was hiring.

The New Zealand-owned business was preparing for further growth by launching a nationwide recruitment drive. It was supported by a highly public media campaign aiming to attract people to the brand to continue its "outstanding" sales performance, said national sales manager Tom Ruddenklau.

He added: "2009 was Hyundai's most successful year yet by selling more vehicles in New Zealand than it ever has done before in its 28-year history. That's why, as the campaign says, from Northland to Invercargill, from mechanics to service managers and salespeople, every dealership is looking for more people."

Hyundai NZ finished 2009 with positive results in what was a tough year for the industry. It sold a record 5,042 units, an increase of 6.7 per cent in a year that saw the overall new-car market fall by 28 per cent.

The result saw the brand climb to fifth place in the passenger-vehicle market, up two from 2008. It secured 8.6 per cent of the overall market in December to finish with 7.2 per cent for the year.



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Mandates must follow real supply

When the government proposes new safety technology requirements for vehicles entering New Zealand, many assume it's simply a matter of choosing a date and letting the market adjust.

That assumption ignores a structural reality because our country doesn't just import new cars. We also bring in used vehicles from Japan roughly 12 years after their first sale. This lag isn't a flaw in the system. It is the system.

Unless safety policy reflects that reality, mandates will not accelerate safety. Instead, they will shrink supply, raise prices and widen inequity.

Used imports dominate our light-vehicle market with a mean import age of around 11 years. It's tempting to treat that mean average as a reasonable compliance cut-off. But a mean is only a midpoint, not a safe policy threshold.

Setting a mandate at 11 years instantly disqualifies roughly 50 per cent of all used imports because around one-half of the vehicles entering New Zealand are older than that. That is not a gradual nudge, it is a supply shock.

A more defensible benchmark is the 80 per cent availability age because this is the point at which most of the market remains accessible.

For Aotearoa's used imports, that threshold sits at roughly 12 years. Even then, a mandate removes about 20 per cent of supply overnight before considering whether those vehicles actually carry the required technology.

This makes the government's proposed 2027 mandate for automatic emergency braking (AEB) deeply problematic.

In 2027, New Zealand will primarily be importing 2015-16 Japanese vehicles. While AEB adoption was rising at that time, it was far from universal and heavily concentrated in higher specification trims.

Kiwis overwhelmingly purchase lower specification, more affordable variants. As a result, real AEB availability for vehicles our market in fact will buy in 2027 is closer to 55-60 per cent, not the headline figures often quoted.

Combine that partial availability with a 12-year age



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

cut-off and a 2027 mandate produces an effective supply contraction of roughly 35-50 per cent.

That scale of disruption is not manageable. It would raise prices, reduce mobility for lower-income households

and slow fleet turnover as people hold onto older, less-safe vehicles for longer.

None of this argues against AEB. It argues for timing it correctly.

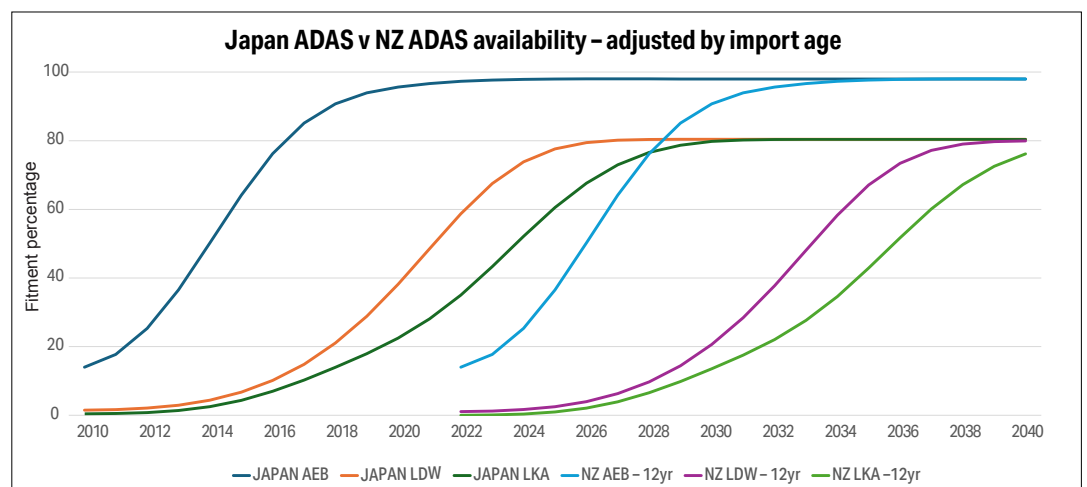
Evidence shows meaningful availability for New Zealand consumers emerges closer to 2029 with near universal access in the early 2030s. A mandate in that window captures real safety gains without collapsing supply or undermining equity.

Lane-departure warning (LDW) and lane-keep assist (LKA), however, are different cases.

These systems are not mandated in Japan, remain trim dependent and plateau at lower adoption levels.

Shifted by the same 12-year lag, LDW doesn't reach meaningful availability until the mid-2030s and LKA may never become universal in the used-imports pool. Mandating them early would remove affordable models without delivering proportional safety benefits.

Safety policy must be grounded in real-world supply, not aspiration. Ignoring the 12-year import lag doesn't accelerate progress. It entrenches inequality. The right policy aligns with how New Zealanders actually purchase their cars and not how we wish they did. ☺



This graph shows how quickly AEB, LDW and LKA were adopted in Japan and how those ADAS realistically become available in New Zealand with the age distribution of used imports applied. Because 80 per cent of our used imports are 12 years old or newer, a 12-year shift is used to model when our importers can access models equipped with each system in meaningful volumes. Even though Japan mandated AEB for new vehicles and reached near-universal fitment by 2021, NZ doesn't receive these until they reach

affordable import age resulting in NZ AEB availability rising only from the late 2020s and hitting high coverage in the early 2030s. LDW and LKA, which have no Japanese mandate, rise more slowly and never reach full adoption. Accordingly, NZ cannot expect high availability of these features until the mid-to-late 2030s, if ever. This modelling demonstrates ADAS mandates based on new-vehicle adoption timelines in Japan cannot be applied directly to NZ's used-imports market without causing major supply shortages. *Source: VIA*

Plugged in for 'power uplift'

Toyota's RAV4 is returning early this year in its sixth generation with two firsts – a plug-in hybrid (PHEV) and GR Sport variant.

There will also be new styling and technology for what is New Zealand's and the world's top-selling passenger car.

And for the first time on our shores, the RAV4 will be available in three designs starting with the Core and its range of grades and powertrains.

The Adventure, meanwhile, is for tackling roads less travelled and the GR Sport will boast a "bold, sleek, sporty edge".

The PHEV will provide access to higher power output compared to hybrid variants while offering a reduction in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

Andrew Davis, Toyota NZ's chief strategic officer, describes it as a "natural next step for Kiwis on their electrification journey".

He says: "It suits just about everybody. It has a PHEV powertrain built on our sixth-generation hybrid technology with a floor mounted high-capacity rechargeable battery."

Not only does it save fuel and CO2 emissions, but the combination of its electric motors



The new sixth-generation RAV4

with the more powerful battery gives the plug-in a "power uplift" compared to the standard hybrid.

Davis says the vehicle's new design is based on three design elements. These are "big foot" with an emphasis on large-diameter tyres, "lift up", which encompasses its SUV elevation, and "utility" for its capability and easy-to-use cargo space.

The front bumper and grille have been redesigned to have a sharper and cleaner look. It boasts a strong c-shaped headlight arrangement and deeper grille featuring 3D designs.

The 2026 RAV4's entertainment experience includes a new multimedia system with swipe-across screens to mirror personal digital devices.

Island architecture is a design

in which various functions, such as displays and switches, are grouped. In addition to a horizontal instrument panel, it offers improved use by arranging the navigation system, meters and other elements to reduce eye movement.

The centre console's design enhances usability with its fast-charging smartphone pads and USB ports. It also comes with a reversible console-box lid that can be used as an armrest or a tray when flipped.

While the overall RAV4 size remains the same, the back-door window angle is more upright to expand trunk capacity from 733 litres to 749l and the rear seatbacks are flatter when folded.

The marque has structured the new RAV4 range to meet the needs of three key groups of buyers – private customers, businesses and fleets, and driving enthusiasts. It comes with two powertrains and drivetrains.

The PHEV will be available in three guises. These are the front-wheel drive (FWD) GXL, AWD XSE and the AWD GR Sport.

As the model's flagship, the GR Sport will only be offered with the PHEV AWD. Based on the sixth-generation 2.5-litre hybrid system, 22.7kWh lithium-ion battery, and powerful front and rear electric motors, it produces a maximum combined total system output of 227kW. It will be the most powerful RAV4 in New Zealand to date.

The Core will be available in four grades – the GX HEV FWD and AWD, GXL HEV FWD, AWD and FWD PHEV, XSE PHEV AWD and Limited HEV AWD. The XSE PHEV AWD sits in a mid-point between the GXL and fully specified Limited.

All hybrid grades employ a fifth-generation system with a 2.5l petrol engine and either FWD or e-four AWD for a combined total system output of 143kW.

First deliveries of the new RAV4 are expected in the first half of this year with demonstration models in stores sooner than that.

SINGLE GRADE SEDAN

While sales of new sedans have declined, Toyota NZ will continue to offer the Camry – although in just one grade, the executive-level ZR.

Davis says the model has served the marque and its customers well for three decades, taking a key role in the company's "no customer left behind" approach.

"The Camry is the only remaining model in our medium-sedan segment, which has declined steadily as customers shift to SUVs.

"But we've listened to customers and will be keeping the ZR in our portfolio. It's a way of streamlining our efforts into providing cars Kiwis want."

In its current guise, the ZR model is powered by a 2.5l petrol hybrid engine with an e-CVT transmission and has a fuel-economy rate of 4.5l/100km. Ⓟ

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Sedan's range reaches 630km

Kia's all-new EV4 comes in two long-range grades – the Light 2WD and higher-specification GT-Line 2WD.

The marque describes them as the most aerodynamic models it has ever made, while the fifth battery electric car in its portfolio boasts a WLTP driving range of up to 633km.

“The EV4 is another progressive expression of Kia's design ethos ‘opposites united’ and is a unique addition to our impressive EV range,” says Todd McDonald, managing director of Kia NZ.

“Drawing on the award-winning features of its recently launched cousin, the EV3, this fastback provides customers with the technology they've come to expect from our electric vehicles in a forward-thinking and expressive design.

“At the time of launching the



The EV4 Light 2WD LR

EV3, its range was and is industry-leading in New Zealand, tackling range anxiety head on and providing a solution.

“The EV4 further builds off this range, showcasing our innovation as a brand.”

The fully electric sedan's available power and torque come in at 150kW and 283Nm, battery capacity is 81.4kWh and the battery can be boosted from 10-80 per cent in just 31 minutes when

using an ultra-fast DC charger.

It also features a digital 29.6-inch panoramic display, the brand's latest suspension technology, Kia Connect functionality, over-the-air updates, e-call access, exterior and interior vehicle-to-load capabilities, and a range of advanced driver-assistance systems.

The Light 2WD Long Range's package boasts forward collision-avoidance assist, lane-keeping and lane-follow assist, smart cruise

control with stop and go, and a rear-view monitor with dynamic guidelines.

Extra features for the GT-Line 2WD Long Range include a full-colour, head-up display, heated and ventilated front seats, heated steering wheel, power sunroof with one-touch tilting and sliding function, power tailgate, exclusive 19-inch alloys, wireless phone charging and a premium Harmon Kardon sound system.

Pricing starts at \$63,990 for the Light 2WD Long Range and \$75,990 for the GT-Line 2WD Long Range, plus on-road costs.

“We are excited to introduce the EV4 as part of our EV line-up in New Zealand,” adds McDonald. “It offers an innovative design, comfort, refinement, and an unheralded range with practicality and versatility. We're certain it will surprise many people.”



The HS Hybrid+

Variants launched

The evolution of MG's HS line-up is complete with the arrival of the all-new HS Hybrid+ and Super Hybrid.

The latest variants of the mid-sized SUV offer “the best of electrified motoring” for local conditions and “significantly improved efficiency”.

The HS Hybrid+ delivers maximum power and torque of 165kW and 340Nm thanks to a high-capacity 1.83kWh hybrid battery, 1.5-litre turbo engine and 146kW electric motor.

When it comes to adjustable regeneration levels, drivers can choose from low or high to optimise energy capture.

With a wider 1,890mm body and extended 4,670mm length, passengers have ample room to relax. Boot capacity is 1,484l with the rear seats folded.

The HS Super Hybrid's 154kW and 340Nm traction motor delivers combined output of 220kW and 350Nm, and boasts an improved pure-electric WLTP range of up to 120km. This variant has more than 1,000km of combined range when fully charged and fuelled.

The HS Hybrid+ is available for \$44,990 for the Excite and \$48,990 for the Essence, excluding on-roads. The HS Super Hybrid costs from \$52,990 and \$56,990 respectively.

WANTED TO BUY



Contact:

Paul Curin

0274 333 303

pcurin@milesgroup.co.nz



MILES GROUP

World's future stars face off

Rising Kiwis including V8 Supercars star Ryan Wood and single-seater racer Louis Sharp are up against some top talent from home and overseas in New Zealand's premier series.

From its first season in 2005, the Toyota Racing Series has offered drivers a high-intensity boost going into the international racing year.

It has provided end-to-end weekends contesting trophies, offering competitors 2,500-3,000km of practice, qualifying and racing while European and American tracks are closed for the northern hemisphere's winter.

Now known as the Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Trophy (CTFROT) and in its 21st season, the country's fastest category pits drivers visiting here against top Kiwis over four meetings.

In 2025, the championship ran over five rounds and attracted 21 entrants with Zac Scouler, Alex Crosbie and Seb Manson flying our national flag. It was won by Sebastian Lindblad, Red Bull's fast-rising Brit, as Scouler finished second overall.

Entries for 2026 suggest the standard of competition will be of the same exciting and high standards as last year.

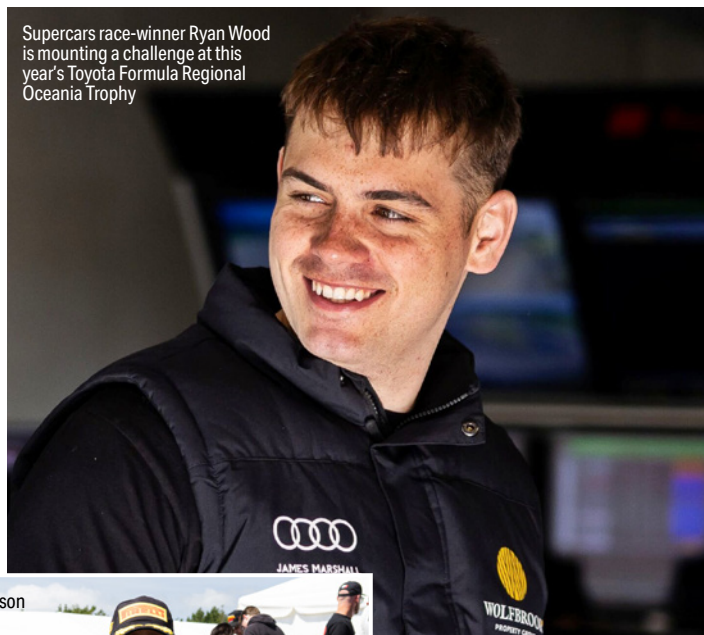
It's the second straight season in CTFROT for Manson. Last year, he scored two race wins on his way to sixth overall.

The 17-year-old's 2025 campaign was the foundation of his first full year of racing internationally.

The former New Zealand National and South Island Formula Ford champion followed up his domestic campaign with a season in the USF Pro 2000 Championship and a run in the Japanese Formula Regional series in which he netted second overall.

Manson is hoping all his hard work at home and abroad in 2025 will add up to an even stronger 2026 campaign.

Supercars race-winner Ryan Wood is mounting a challenge at this year's Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Trophy



Seb Manson



Louis Sharp



Freddie Slater

"I'm excited to be back for a second full season," he says. "It was cool last time around and I'm aiming higher this time. I want to build on those results and use the championship as a launch pad for an even stronger 2026 season."

The Tony Quinn Foundation has awarded V8 Supercars race-winner Wood a \$40,000 grant to contest the series.

Greg Murphy, foundation trustee, says the opportunity was one Wood has been eager to pursue for some time.

"We came really close in 2021 before Covid-19, so it's awesome to finally get a deal done this year with great backing from the foundation and so many others."

Rising star Louis Sharp has also been awarded a grant, his one's for \$100,000, to support his campaign.

"I'm super excited to return home and race in New Zealand's premier championship," he says.

"This series has been on my bucket list since I was very young, so to have the opportunity with the foundation's help is a dream come true."

Looking ahead, Sharp anticipates the campaign will be invaluable preparation before his European return.

"Having the whole off-season spent racing in such a competitive environment with some of the best up-and-coming drivers from around the world is perfect preparation before heading back to continue my path towards F1."

The UK's Freddie Slater was the first confirmed entry out of the blocks for this year's Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Trophy and is being

tipped as one of the favourites for the title. The 17-year-old won the 2020 FIA Karting World Championship in the direct-drive class, and took out the European titles in 2021 and two years later.

Slater also won the Ginetta Junior Championship in the UK in 2023 before progressing to junior single-seater formulae and finding immediate success. He won the Italian F4 title with Prema Racing in 2024 and, in the same year, the F4 UAE title with the Mumbai Falcons.

He raced to eight victories last year for Prema on his way to winning the Formula Regional European Championship, and was the first confirmed driver for the M2 Competition team here.

"Learning new circuits will keep the season exciting in New Zealand," says Slater.

"Hopefully we can put on a

"He wanted to follow in the footsteps of what Will Brown and Broc Feeney did last season in the Toyota FR. Ryan loves driving and loves new challenges. He sees this as a great opportunity to broaden his skill set.

"He knows the competition is incredibly tough, but that is exactly why he's doing it, and that's to stay sharp and continue developing before another Supercars season. He was one of our supported drivers a few years ago, so it's great to have him representing the foundation again."

Wood is thrilled to reconnect with the Tony Quinn Foundation and is looking forward to the challenge of racing at home.

"I've always been eager to compete in the Toyota FR Trophy series ever since I first watched it back in 2014," he enthuses.

◀ good show for the fans worldwide who will be following.”

Chinese junior formula racer and Mercedes Junior Team member, Yuanpu Cui, will begin his 2026 racing season with Mtec Motorsport.

Cui is originally from Xi'An in Shaanxi province. He began racing when he was just eight years old and is one of his home country's brightest motorsport prospects having raced in karts for the best part of a decade.

A former World Series Karting race winner, he achieved success when he switched to circuit racing, securing glory in both the British and Chinese F4 series.

The 17-year-old has experience in Formula Regional as well, having competed in six races in FR Middle East in 2024 and in four rounds of the FR European Championship. He's in New Zealand on the back of his first season in GB3 in the UK.

Cui is hoping he's able to produce a competitive season here as part of Mtec's line-up.

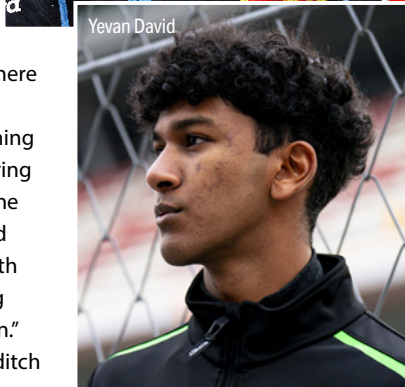
"I'm focused on just performing to the best of my ability and trying to achieve some good results," he says. "Of course, I'm very excited to be racing in New Zealand with Mtec. It will be very challenging and it's a high-level competition."

Jack Taylor has crossed the ditch to compete in Aotearoa's premier single-seater championship.

He was a star in last year's GB4 by scoring two wins, two pole positions, four podiums and three fastest laps.

The Tasmanian is competing for Giles Motorsport in the four-round Castrol Toyota Formula Regional

Two-time WRC winner Kalle Rovanperä is starting his single-seater career in New Zealand



Oceania Trophy and is looking forward to competing closer to the lucky country.

"After two years of racing in the UK in GB4, this is my first time in New Zealand and my closest campaign to home yet so I'm obviously really looking forward to

it," says Taylor. "CTFROT has a strong reputation and was a much better option for me than doing winter testing in Europe."

Kiwi Motorsport's Yevan David has become the first Sri Lankan to race for the trophy.

Raised in Singapore, he was the top rookie in the 2025 Euroformula Open Championship and is here as a prelude to joining the FIA F3 Championship with AIX Racing.

The 18-year-old began his career in karting before progressing to F4, which he competed in throughout 2024.

As well as competing with success in last year's Euroformula,

he also made his debut in the GB3 and scored 15 points across the Silverstone round's three races.

Aspiring Japanese single-seater racer Kanato Le is bringing vast experience of junior formulae with his CTFROT challenge when he joins the Hitech team. Aged 18, Le is originally from Tokyo but moved to the UK alone when he was just 12 years old for the European karting championships and to progress his dream of making it to F1.

Three seasons in karting netted one European title and several top-10 championship finishes before he stepped up to single-seaters in 2022, competing in F4 and gaining tin-top experience in the Ginetta Junior Championship.

And one rumour has turned out to be true. Two-time World Rally Championship winner Kalle Rovanperä's single-seater journey is starting in New Zealand. He hopes it will be transformational process and take him to the top level of circuit racing.

Having retired from rallying, the 25-year-old has his sights set on progressing towards the highest levels of single-seaters, which will include Super Formula in 2026.

"It hasn't been an easy choice by any means," says the Finn. "I've achieved so much in rallying and those things at a young age."

American Ugo Ugochukwu claimed two race wins, and Kiwi Zack Scoular and Louis Sharp one each, on the series' opening weekend at Hampton Downs from January 9-11. It concludes with the NZ Grand Prix at Highlands International Motorsport Park, Cromwell, between January 30 and February 1. 📍

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Tribunal overturns clause to contract out of law because car was primarily for private usage

Background

On May 29, 2025, Riverstone Contracting Ltd purchased a 2019 Mercedes-Benz 400d GLE from Southern Specialist Cars for \$69,990.

Brendan de Martin, company director, signed the vehicle offer and sale agreement (VOSA) and the part in it stating the car was being acquired in trade for business purposes so the Consumer Guarantees Act (CGA) didn't apply.

He and his wife saw it advertised on Trade Me and, post-delivery, he discovered it didn't have a sunroof as advertised. He contacted the trader and told a staff member it was unacceptable.

The dealer said it would rectify the matter and, while it was doing that, the buyer could continue using the car.

Three months later, when the issue hadn't been resolved, De Martin's lawyer gave notice to the trader rejecting the vehicle and the family stopped driving it.

The case

The hoped-for remedy to resolve this issue was the dealer sourcing a comparable car with a sunroof in exchange.

By August 19, 2025, a workable solution hadn't been achieved mainly because any similar vehicle with a sunroof was either unfit or significantly more expensive than the price De Martin paid for his car, so he sent a formal letter through his lawyer to the trader rejecting it.

The tribunal considered if the parties had validly agreed to contract out of the CGA. In the end, the adjudicator didn't find this issue to be determinative because the applicants could also have brought their claim

under section nine of the Fair Trading Act (FTA).

The circumstances in which parties are permitted to contract out of the CGA's guarantees are set out in section 43 and the general rule is that it's not allowed.

However, a limited exception is when the agreement is in writing and a car is acquired in trade, and all parties to the agreement are in trade and have agreed to contract out of the act's provisions.

If these preconditions are met, the tribunal must decide if it's fair and reasonable for the parties to be bound by their agreement having regard to considerations in section 43.

The finding

The tribunal didn't need to decide if the 400d GLE was acquired in trade. Even if it had, the adjudicator wouldn't have considered it fair and reasonable for the parties to be bound by any agreement to contract out of the CGA.

The price of the car was \$69,990. If all other factors were equal, that value was such the parties might be expected to be bound to what they included in their contract.

That was because the amount in issue, should any matters have arisen between the parties, was relatively significant and it was important for there to be some contractual certainty.

As well as being a vehicle ordinarily acquired for personal use, it was apparent the 400d was being acquired by Riverstone for such use – particularly by Mrs De Martin in her role as a midwife – and that business use was only incidental to her personal use of it.

Overall, were it not for the fact that for accounting or insurance reasons Mr De Martin named Riverstone as the purchaser, there would be no question this was a personal transaction.

There was no reason in principle why the CGA shouldn't apply and the tribunal didn't consider it would be fair for the parties to be bound to any contracting out.

Section nine of the act states to correspond with the description by which a vehicle is sold, it must be sufficiently "similar to" that description in the sense of "having a marked resemblance or likeness".

A vehicle without a panoramic sunroof is insufficiently like one that does, so that was a failure to comply, and the consumer may choose to reject a car under section 18 when an issue can't be remedied or is substantial.

The tribunal ruled the problem in this case couldn't be fixed. While the buyer had anecdotal evidence a panoramic sunroof could be installed, the \$30,000 cost was unrealistic.

The failure was also deemed to be of substantial

The case: Upon delivery, the buyer discovered a 2019 Mercedes-Benz 400d GLE didn't have a sunroof, which was advertised in its listing on Trade Me Motors, and rejected the car. The dealer said it would remedy the situation. Three months later, the trader hadn't found a replacement vehicle with a sunroof, so the purchaser lodged an application with the tribunal to resolve the issue.

The decision: The trader was ordered to refund the \$69,990 purchase price.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal via video link.

character as defined in section 21 of the CGA, so the consumer was entitled to reject the car and this was done via a phone call to the trader.

The fact the buyer didn't insist on a refund immediately and allowed time for the trader to try to find a replacement was irrelevant.

The adjudicator also considered the dealer's reassurance the De Martin family could continue driving the car in the interim was a licence to carry on using it.

Because the tribunal had found a substantial failure under the CGA, it was unnecessary to determine the alternative application under the FTA but it did so anyway.

Remembering the FTA doesn't require fault or knowledge, even the innocent description of a car as having a panoramic sunroof when it didn't must be taken as capable of misleading a buyer, so section nine had been breached.

The tribunal was satisfied the consumer suffered loss and that, if necessary remedies hadn't been available under the CGA, the adjudicator would have ordered avoidance of the VOSA under section 43 of the FTA.

Orders

The trader had to pay the buyer \$69,990 and collect the car. ⊕



A 2019 Mercedes-Benz 400d GLE

Purchaser claims it wasn't told about write-off status but disclosure featured in advertising

Background

Lake Self-Loading Ltd purchased a 2019 Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8 Facelift Black Package for \$86,000 on July 13, 2025. When the company tried to trade it in, it discovered the car had been written off in Australia before being imported.

Aaron Lake and his wife Christine, directors of Lake Self-Loading, claimed they were unaware of this when they bought the vehicle. They said they paid too much for it and sought a remedy under the Fair Trading Act (FTA).

The case

Aaron Lake saw the car advertised on Trade Me but didn't view it pre-purchase. He said he was familiar with that type of vehicle having previously owned three Jeeps.

In evidence, he provided a Turners Group valuation dated August 14, 2025, which set its market value at \$50,000.

Lake Self-Loading submitted that this showed it had paid too much for the vehicle and the reduced value was linked to its status as a written-off import, which hadn't been disclosed.

Niki Mills, director of Christchurch European, disagreed with the valuation submitted and he estimated the market value was \$75,000 because of its low mileage. He then provided evidence to show the trader had disclosed the Jeep was an Australian statutory write-off.

The dealer's salesman told the hearing he had informed Lake the vehicle was imported damaged during a telephone call and had been written off after being stolen. He added there were no issues relating to the car's status. Lake couldn't recall whether he had been given that information or not.

Mills also noted the Jeep was \$15,000 less than the comparable

A 2019 Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8



list price for a vehicle of its type and condition because of its write-off status. However, the buyers stated their price comparisons indicated it wasn't listed for less than market value.

Christchurch European provided a copy of the Trade Me advert, which clearly set out the car's status and included a header stating, "damaged import check".

It added: "This vehicle was imported into New Zealand with obvious damage or deterioration. This alert will not appear if the vehicle had superficial dents to some of its body panels."

The description of the car included: "Note – ex-Australian statutory write-off, stolen then recovered. Pics available."

Lake said he didn't review all the advert's content and didn't notice references to it being a written-off vehicle.

He added the consumer information notice (CIN) wasn't provided with the Trade Me advert and a backdated CIN had been supplied post-supply, which was contrary to the requirements of the Consumer Information Standards (Used Motor Vehicles) Regulations 2008 (CIS Regulations).

It was submitted had a CIN been provided with the advertisement, this would have included the car's status.

The dealer stated Trade Me's system automated the production of information that must be

provided under the regulations and its own system produced a CIN from the details it held, which was produced and sent to Lake Self-Loading with the contract. The dealer added there was also a link on Christchurch European's website with a CIN.

The finding

The issue for the tribunal to consider was whether Christchurch European had engaged in misleading conduct in breach of section nine of the FTA and, if it had, what remedies were available.

The tribunal reviewed the Trade Me listing and noted it did contain CIN information and, more particularly, a prominent box titled "damaged import check" that gave details about the car's status.

It also noted a sale could not be completed on the Trade Me system for Christchurch European listings, which instead provided links to the dealer's website.

The adjudicator reviewed the trader's site and saw a CIN could be obtained from a listing by clicking on a link titled "consumer information notice", which produced the document.

The CIS Regulations set out what must be provided when a dealer sells a used vehicle. They state that a CIN must be attached to the car in a prominent position.

Included in the regulations is a requirement to provide information about used imports,

The case: Thirteen months post-supply, it was discovered that a 2019 Jeep Grand Cherokee had been written off in Australia before being imported into New Zealand. The purchaser claimed the trader failed to inform it about that and sought a remedy from the tribunal. The dealer said the buyer wasn't only verbally informed about the issue, but information was also available on its website and the Jeep's Trade Me advert.

The decision: The buyer's application was dismissed.

At: The Motor Vehicle Disputes Tribunal via video link.

such as the country where a vehicle was last registered and if imported damaged. As noted, the buyers claimed the rules hadn't been complied with.

The requirement to display the CIN is set out in regulation six of the CIS Regulations, which contains specific provisions relating to internet sales, and the tribunal was satisfied Christchurch European complied with those rules.

The regulations establish a minimum standard that must be complied with. Under the FTA, there may be a requirement to provide more information, especially if specific information is requested.

In this case, there was no evidence any such inquiries were made and the tribunal found Lake Self-Loading hadn't established the dealer engaged in false or misleading conduct in breach of section nine of the FTA.

It was satisfied Christchurch European made the Jeep's status as an Australian statutory write-off available in the Trade Me sales advert and on its own website.

The adjudicator said Lake stated he didn't review all the available information. If he had, it would have been apparent to him the Jeep had been imported as a statutory write-off.

Order

The application was dismissed. ⊕

Seatbelt failure sparks recall

Suzuki has called back about 18 per cent of Fronx SUVs sold in New Zealand because of concerns over their rear seatbelts.

The recall applies to 214 units, which includes some of the company's stock, after 1,081 had been registered before Christmas when the all-new model was withdrawn from the market.

The number of affected vehicles in use and dealer demonstrators here is 191. Across Australia, 249 out of about 1,600 sold have been called back.

The recalls follow a "customer alert" being issued on December 22 by ANCAP after a seatbelt retractor failed during a full-width frontal test.

This resulted in an "uncontrolled seatbelt release" when a crash-test dummy became unrestrained and hit the rear of the front seat.

The Fronx had already received zero points in that test before the failure occurred because of the high chest load recorded. ANCAP's testing showed the SUV, which received an overall one-star rating, delivered "poor" levels of protection for adult and child occupants.

Suzuki NZ implemented urgent measures to ensure Fronx owners could still travel over the festive period after a "do not use" recommendation for the rear seats.

Gary Collins, chief executive officer and executive general manager of automobile at Suzuki NZ, says: "We have been in communication with customers to advise if their vehicle is included in the recall or not. If their vehicle is affected, we have recommended they don't use the rear seats until replacement components are fitted.

"If this is inconvenient for customers, we have asked they advise us to assist with alternative transport arrangements until the safety recall is completed."

Collins describes the marque's dealerships as being "very supportive" and it has been in close contact with them to support owners impacted by the recall.

He told Autofile on January 7: "Suzuki NZ has endeavoured to



A Suzuki Fronx undergoing ANCAP's full-width frontal test



Dummies during crash-testing



Gary Collins, CEO of Suzuki NZ

respond to customer questions and concerns throughout the holiday period with management directly involved in these communications.

"The recall for the Fronx also applies to Suzuki Australia and we've been working with them throughout. We will be in contact again with customers affected by the recall when the replacement components are supplied to us by Suzuki Motor Corporation [SMC].

"The Fronx has been an incredible success for Suzuki NZ, recognised for its great value, high specifications, strong fuel efficiency and attractive styling. We are working closely with SMC on the matter to ensure the continued sales success of the model in our market."

After the release of ANCAP's customer alert, the NZTA issued its own statement advising owners to avoid carrying passengers in the rear seats.

"The Fronx has received a one-star safety rating based on its poor performance in the crash test," says the agency. "While the seatbelt failure is serious, the low rating reflects poor performance across

all aspects of testing by ANCAP.

"The failure of this safety-critical component in a crash test is a significant concern."

ACROSS THE TASMAN

A statement issued by Suzuki Australia acknowledges ANCAP's recent assessment of the 2025 Fronx Hybrid.

It adds it is "taking decisive action, including a thorough investigation, as customer safety is non-negotiable and remains Suzuki's highest priority".

"Suzuki Australia has elevated the review to a matter of immediate focus, and is working with SMC in Japan and Suzuki NZ to fully understand ANCAP's testing outcomes. This review is being progressed with urgency and at the highest levels of the organisation."

The statement – issued on December 22 by Michael Pachota, general manager of automobiles – says the company "firmly believes" in learning from local testing and regulatory feedback as part of its continuous improvement philosophy.

"These assessments are treated

seriously and play an important role in strengthening vehicle safety, performance and reliability.

"The Fronx Hybrid was developed with the aim of being a vehicle that meets the safety standards of Australia and New Zealand. It has been certified as such, providing peace of mind for our customers."

On the actual problems, the company explains: "Due to a manufacturing defect, the left-rear seatbelt retractor mechanism may not operate as intended.

"As a result, excessive belt lengths may be released in the event of an accident or hard braking. If the left-rear seatbelt doesn't operate as intended, it could increase the risk of injury or death to vehicle occupant."

'RARE AND SERIOUS'

ANCAP says the Fronx's one-star rating reflects its overall performance, particularly structure and restraint systems, and isn't a consequence of the seatbelt failure.

Its protection percentage scores came in at 48 for adult occupants, 40 for children and 65 for vulnerable road-users. Safety-assist was assessed as 55 per cent.

In the full-width frontal test, excessive chest loads were recorded for the rear passenger. Key body regions of child occupants were capped at zero points due to high head acceleration and excessive neck tension.

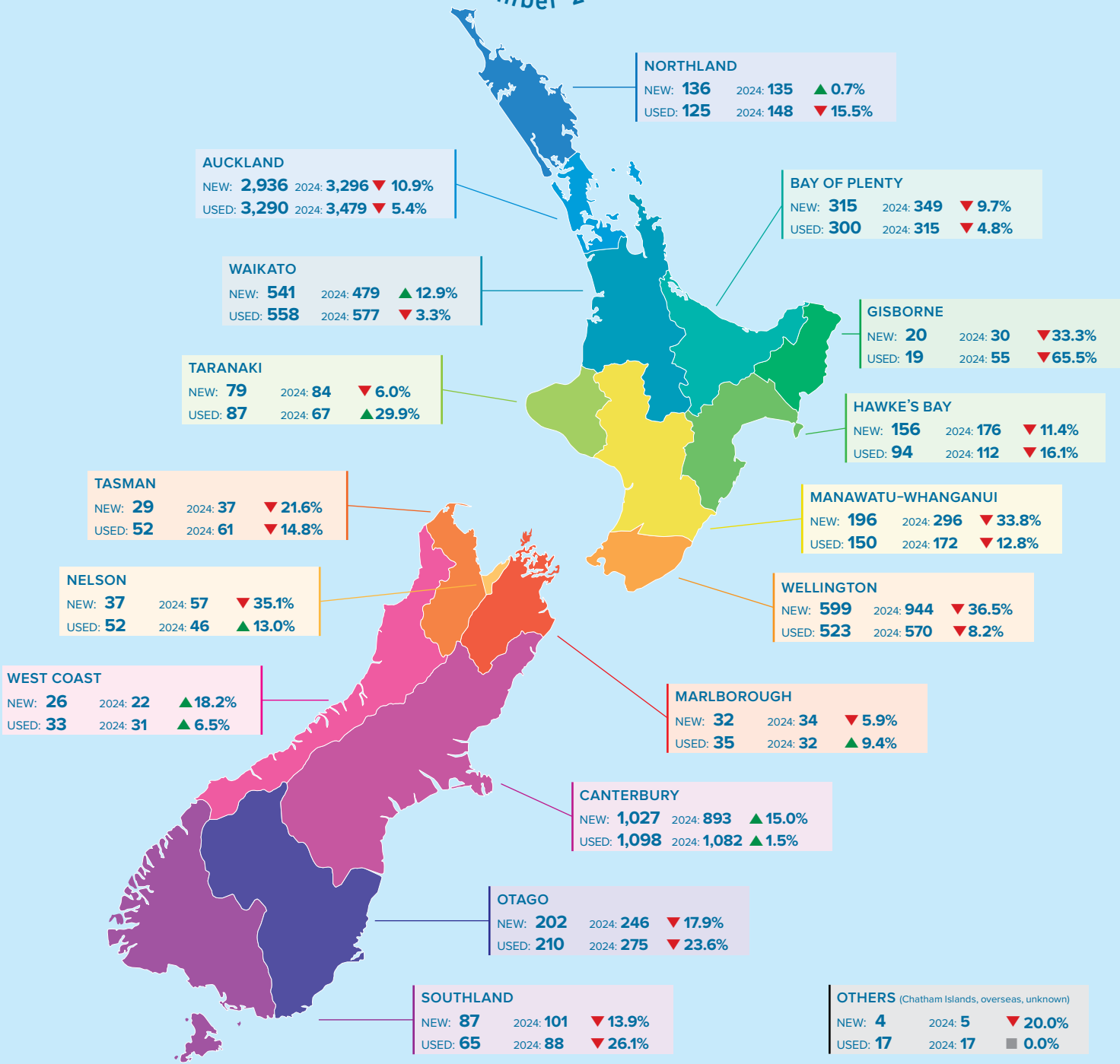
"We exist to give consumers confidence," says Carla Hoorweg, ANCAP's chief executive officer. "When our tests reveal results of this nature, we will act in their best interest by communicating our findings promptly and transparently. The seatbelt component failure is rare and serious.

"ANCAP encourages all manufacturers to bring their vehicles forward for testing ahead of market release as it allows the opportunity for issues to be identified and rectified before vehicles are driven on roads." ☺

AROUND THE COUNTRY
December 2025

Total new cars
6,422
2024: 7,184 ▼ 10.6%

Total imported used cars
6,708
2024: 7,127 ▼ 5.9%



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Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - December 2025

MAKE	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/-%	DEC'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	2,616	2,550	2.6%	39.0%	31,851	37.5%
Nissan	970	958	1.3%	14.5%	11,894	14.0%
Mazda	894	881	1.5%	13.3%	11,710	13.8%
Subaru	581	750	-22.5%	8.7%	7,282	8.6%
Honda	513	679	-24.4%	7.6%	7,617	9.0%
BMW	236	254	-7.1%	3.5%	3,008	3.5%
Suzuki	156	191	-18.3%	2.3%	2,142	2.5%
Mitsubishi	126	134	-6.0%	1.9%	1,451	1.7%
Mercedes-Benz	125	133	-6.0%	1.9%	1,725	2.0%
Lexus	125	123	1.6%	1.9%	1,350	1.6%
Audi	104	127	-18.1%	1.6%	1,499	1.8%
Volkswagen	64	92	-30.4%	1.0%	993	1.2%
Land Rover	38	33	15.2%	0.6%	464	0.5%
Tesla	29	25	16.0%	0.4%	205	0.2%
Ford	18	31	-41.9%	0.3%	247	0.3%
Volvo	14	15	-6.7%	0.2%	185	0.2%
Mini	13	9	44.4%	0.2%	181	0.2%
Jaguar	10	12	-16.7%	0.1%	197	0.2%
Chevrolet	10	19	-47.4%	0.1%	111	0.1%
Hyundai	8	6	33.3%	0.1%	63	0.1%
Porsche	7	13	-46.2%	0.1%	127	0.1%
Jeep	5	24	-79.2%	0.1%	127	0.1%
BYD	5	0	500.0%	0.1%	32	0.0%
Renault	4	0	400.0%	0.1%	20	0.0%
Chrysler	4	9	-55.6%	0.1%	49	0.1%
Dodge	3	13	-76.9%	0.0%	46	0.1%
Pontiac	2	1	100.0%	0.0%	16	0.0%
Polestar	2	0	200.0%	0.0%	4	0.0%
Plymouth	2	2	0.0%	0.0%	8	0.0%
Peugeot	2	3	-33.3%	0.0%	30	0.0%
Isuzu	2	0	200.0%	0.0%	10	0.0%
Haval	2	1	100.0%	0.0%	11	0.0%
Buick	2	2	0.0%	0.0%	12	0.0%
Alfa Romeo	2	2	0.0%	0.0%	15	0.0%
Triumph	1	0	100.0%	0.0%	6	0.0%
Others	13	35	-62.9%	0.2%	343	0.4%
Total	6,708	7,127	-5.9%	100.0%	85,031	100.0%

Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - December 2025

MAKE	MODEL	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/-%	DEC'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	Aqua	741	732	1.2%	11.0%	9,010	10.6%
Toyota	Prius	489	441	10.9%	7.3%	6,122	7.2%
Toyota	Corolla	365	313	16.6%	5.4%	4,312	5.1%
Nissan	Note	289	195	48.2%	4.3%	3,605	4.2%
Mazda	Axela	224	225	-0.4%	3.3%	3,340	3.9%
Nissan	Serena	212	220	-3.6%	3.2%	1,987	2.3%
Subaru	Impreza	212	288	-26.4%	3.2%	2,677	3.1%
Toyota	C-HR	208	187	11.2%	3.1%	2,790	3.3%
Honda	Fit	195	242	-19.4%	2.9%	3,202	3.8%
Nissan	X-Trail	194	211	-8.1%	2.9%	2,343	2.8%
Mazda	CX-5	169	160	5.6%	2.5%	2,143	2.5%
Mazda	Demio	165	213	-22.5%	2.5%	2,250	2.6%
Subaru	XV	146	177	-17.5%	2.2%	2,052	2.4%
Toyota	Yaris	113	34	232.4%	1.7%	802	0.9%
Nissan	Leaf	111	68	63.2%	1.7%	1,383	1.6%
Toyota	Vellfire	110	108	1.9%	1.6%	1,004	1.2%
Honda	Vezel	106	127	-16.5%	1.6%	1,562	1.8%
Suzuki	Swift	101	147	-31.3%	1.5%	1,517	1.8%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	89	69	29.0%	1.3%	923	1.1%
Mazda	Atenza	68	73	-6.8%	1.0%	810	1.0%
Toyota	Camry	64	66	-3.0%	1.0%	792	0.9%
Subaru	Outback	62	50	24.0%	0.9%	505	0.6%
Subaru	Legacy	60	91	-34.1%	0.9%	685	0.8%
Toyota	Sai	57	29	96.6%	0.8%	520	0.6%
Mazda	CX-8	57	6	850.0%	0.8%	415	0.5%
Toyota	Alphard	57	83	-31.3%	0.8%	609	0.7%
Toyota	Vitz	50	57	-12.3%	0.7%	830	1.0%
Mazda	CX-3	45	39	15.4%	0.7%	532	0.6%
BMW	Mini	44	28	57.1%	0.7%	543	0.6%
BMW	320i	44	64	-31.3%	0.7%	535	0.6%
Mazda	Premacy	41	97	-57.7%	0.6%	755	0.9%
Subaru	Forester	41	61	-32.8%	0.6%	514	0.6%
Honda	Shuttle	40	41	-2.4%	0.6%	438	0.5%
Volkswagen	Golf	37	52	-28.8%	0.6%	599	0.7%
Honda	Odyssey	36	75	-52.0%	0.5%	537	0.6%
Others		1,666	2,058	-19.0%	24.8%	22,388	26.3%
Total		6,708	7,127	-5.9%	100.0%	85,031	100.0%



WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR VEHICLE SUPPLIER?

Standard drives profit drop

Carbon tax costs chargeable under the clean car standard (CCS) have impacted 2 Cheap Cars' net profit after tax (NPAT), which fell to \$1.01 million during 2025/26's first half.

That was a year-on-year drop of 39.5 per cent from \$1.67m. Revenue and income were down over the same timeframe, by five per cent from \$42.01m to \$39.77m, as vehicle sales fell by 13 per cent to 3,604 units.

The company's gross margin over the six-month period decreased by two percentage points to 19 per cent – down from \$9.01m to \$7.86m.

2 Cheap Cars says the drop in NPAT was primarily because of a \$700,000 after-tax impact of the CCS "as other movements largely offset each other". It adds the CCS impacted used importers due to shifting compliance thresholds and rising carbon credit costs.

That said, some relief has arrived with the government

dropping penalties under the scheme from a top rate of \$33.75 to \$7.50 per gram of carbon dioxide for used imports from the start of this year.

Other challenges in the first half of the 2026 fiscal year were cited as economic weakness, margin pressure, low immigration and the cost of living. While the revenue decline reflected lower car sales, this was partially offset by improved retail pricing. Finance penetration rose to 32 per cent. Insurance topped 41 per cent.

"Several external factors provided partial offsets," adds the company. "Lower interest rates are improving affordability through reduced finance costs while a strong New Zealand dollar against the yen supported more favourable import pricing.

"However, significant international competition for late-model, fuel-efficient Japanese vehicles is continuing to drive up

Trade slides

There were 6,708 used-imported cars registered in December for a drop of 5.9 per cent compared to 7,127 in the same month of 2024.

Toyota's Aqua topped the models ladder with 741 units. The Prius was second on 489 and Corolla third with 365. Next up were the Nissan Note on 289 and Mazda Axela with 224.

Last month's top three marques were Toyota with 2,616 units, Nissan on 970 and Mazda with 894.

procurement costs and tighten supply."

The company notes it has benefitted from increased onshore sourcing through direct purchases alongside trade-ins, which help reduce exposure to carbon-credit obligations and support a more "balanced inventory mix".

In response to market conditions, 2 Cheap Cars has made operational adjustments to "enhance flexibility and strengthen

long-term capability". These include recruiting a brand and marketing manager to accelerate investment in direct-to-consumer channels.

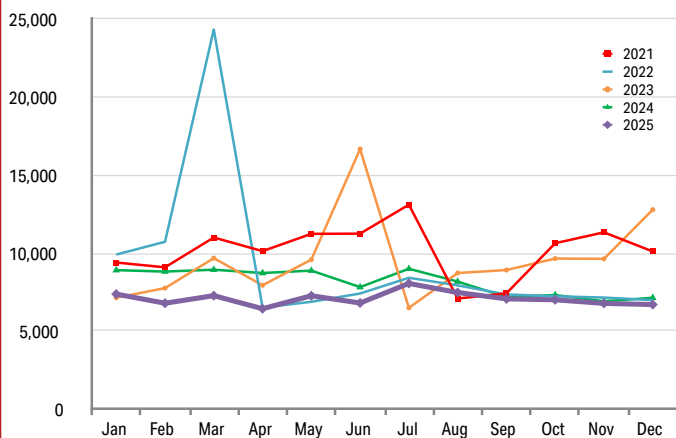
OWNERSHIP CHANGE

A management buyout of NZ Cheap Cars has been completed with managing director Michael Yang and Neil Saunders, chief financial officer, acquiring full ownership of the company from co-founder Eugene Williams following a structured financing process.

A statement from the company reads: "Williams, who also founded and previously listed 2 Cheap Cars on the NZX, has exited the New Zealand used-car retail industry.

"NZ Cheap Cars will continue operating under its existing brand and management structure with a focus on steady growth and maintaining its position as one of the country's leading used-vehicle dealership groups." ☺

Used Imported Passenger Registrations - 2021-2025



Used Imported Passenger Vehicle Sales by Motive Power - December 2025

MAKE	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/- %	DEC'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	172	102	68.6%	2.6%	1,757	2.1%
Plug-in hybrid electric	85	56	51.8%	1.3%	743	0.9%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	3,548	3,065	15.8%	52.9%	41,339	48.6%
Petrol	2,777	3,793	-26.8%	41.4%	39,918	46.9%
Diesel	126	111	13.5%	1.9%	1,273	1.5%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	1	0.0%
Total	6,708	7,127	-5.9%		85,031	

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



Consumers focus on cyber risks

Security is an important factor when it comes to purchasing decisions with about 90 per cent of consumers saying strong protections directly influence if they opt for a connected vehicle.

That's according to RunSafe Security's connected-car index, which surveyed 2,000 motorists in the UK, US and Germany.

Eighty-seven per cent of respondents believe cyber-security is a driver with more than one-third willing to pay a premium for enhanced protection, while 70 per cent will consider buying an older, less-connected model to reduce risk.

"All technology in cabins to sell cars can actually have the opposite effect if consumers lose trust in safety," says Joe Saunders, chief executive of RunSafe Security.

The study found 79 per cent of people prioritise physical safety over data privacy, reflecting awareness that connected-vehicle vulnerabilities carry consequences.

While 65 per cent think remote hacking is possible, only 19 per cent feel "very confident" their car is protected. Over-the-air software updates are seen as risky with 80 per cent believing they could be hacked.

The report found growing unease about the complexity of software supply chains, with 77 per cent of consumers viewing third-party components as cyber-security risks and 83 per cent wanting greater transparency with software origins.

Concerns are especially high around AI-based features with 85 per cent saying they would worry more if such systems came from outside suppliers.

The EU has introduced two binding cyber-security regulations, UN R155 and UN R156, that apply to all vehicles registered in member states.

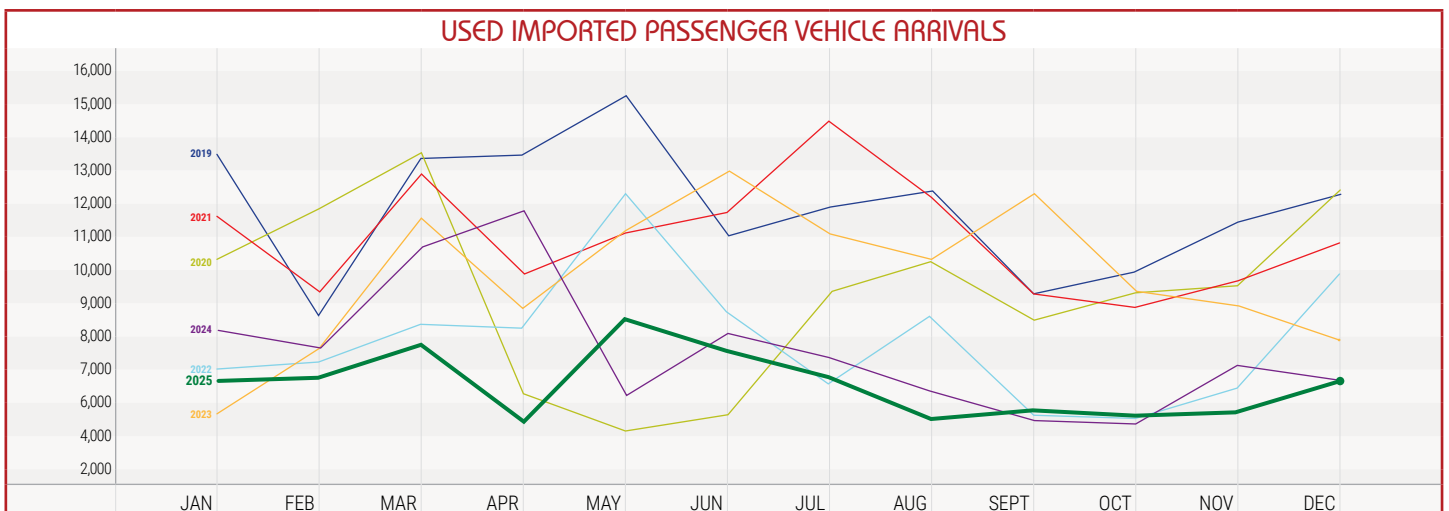
Taken together, they require carmakers to adopt a systematic, proactive approach to security and maintain the integrity of software-driven models.

Both rules became mandatory for new type approvals in July 2022 and, as of July 2024, applied to all vehicles undergoing that process.

YEAR'S END BIG MONTH

There were 77,449 used cars imported into New Zealand during 2025, a drop of 12.2 per cent compared with 88,180 in 2024.

During December, 6,734 units crossed our wharves for last year's biggest month since 6,772 in July. 📍



COUNTRY OF EXPORT	2025													DEC MKT SHARE %	2025 TOTAL	2024		2023	
	JAN '25	FEB '25	MAR '25	APR '25	MAY '25	JUN '25	JUL '25	AUG '25	SEP '25	OCT '25	NOV '25	DEC '25	TOTAL			MKT SHARE	TOTAL	MKT SHARE	
Australia	81	121	100	142	150	112	187	143	105	169	138	160	2.4%	1,608	1,305	2.4%	1,263	1.1%	
Great Britain	14	25	23	12	3	13	14	16	66	17	104	27	0.4%	334	249	0.4%	272	0.2%	
Japan	6,484	6,418	7,469	4,732	8,273	7,596	6,518	4,914	5,464	5,222	5,395	6,501	96.5%	74,986	85,992	96.5%	113,462	98.0%	
Singapore	21	8	5	15	11	15	23	14	10	13	20	18	0.3%	173	250	0.3%	250	0.2%	
USA	38	20	13	14	14	5	12	19	10	21	23	16	0.2%	205	234	0.2%	265	0.2%	
Other countries	29	10	5	2	6	15	18	2	11	20	13	12	0.2%	143	150	0.2%	241	0.2%	
Total	6,667	6,602	7,615	4,917	8,457	7,756	6,772	5,108	5,666	5,462	5,693	6,734	100.0%	77,449	88,180	100.0%	115,753	100.0%	

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Massive jump in fine coming

The government wants to increase the penalty for businesses advertising promotion prices but failing to charge them by 733 per cent.

Nicola Willis, Minister of Finance, is bolstering the Fair Trading Act (FTA) when it comes to those running misleading promotions because the regime “has become outdated”.

Under the current law, companies that advertise a promotional price but fail to charge it face a \$600,000 fine.

Willis says that isn't enough of a deterrent so it will be increased to \$5 million and that can go higher

for particularly bad examples of misleading consumers.

Legislation to enact this will be introduced to parliament early this year.

In addition, companies will face a fine three times the value of the commercial gain made or loss avoided if found to be misleading customers over pricing.

The change has been announced with the Commerce Commission reporting an almost 23 per cent rise in fair-trading complaints over the past five years.

Anne Callinan, deputy chair of the commission, says: “We're pleased to hear penalties will

increase. We think it will make a huge impact in terms of setting deterrents against illegal conduct.”

Consumer NZ's chief executive, Jon Duffy, adds: “We're often talking about multinationals which are facing stiffer penalties in other jurisdictions.

“It's important our penalties provide a deterrent similar to overseas.”

After consultation with businesses and other groups, Willis says the government has decided against proceeding with plans to stop directors taking out insurance or indemnifying themselves from FTA penalties.

She adds: “We have also opted not to progress proposals to expand infringement fees and unfair contract terms provisions.”

SECOND-HAND SALES UP

There were 16,888 second-hand passenger vehicles sold to members of the public by dealers last month for an 11 per cent rise from 15,208 in December 2024.

The total for trade-ins came in at 13,893 for an 11.7 per cent increase from 12,437 over the same timescale.

Private transactions totalled 38,809, which was up by one per cent from 38,443. 📈

SECONDHAND CAR SALES - December 2025

REGION	DEALER TO PUBLIC				PUBLIC TO PUBLIC			PUBLIC TO DEALER		
	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/- %	MARKET SHARE	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/- %	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/- %
Northland	552	513	7.6%	3.3%	1,787	1,788	-0.1%	190	187	1.6%
Auckland	5,649	5,258	7.4%	33.4%	12,723	13,113	-3.0%	6,187	5,522	12.0%
Waikato	1,696	1,596	6.3%	10.0%	3,736	3,761	-0.7%	1,157	1,011	14.4%
Bay of Plenty	1,149	996	15.4%	6.8%	2,811	2,607	7.8%	700	587	19.3%
Gisborne	123	134	-8.2%	0.7%	353	367	-3.8%	53	53	0.0%
Hawke's Bay	571	565	1.1%	3.4%	1,359	1,331	2.1%	457	362	26.2%
Taranaki	357	313	14.1%	2.1%	972	970	0.2%	174	161	8.1%
Manawatu-Whanganui	901	721	25.0%	5.3%	1,984	1,981	0.2%	669	587	14.0%
Wellington	1,580	1,450	9.0%	9.4%	3,074	2,972	3.4%	1,220	1,094	11.5%
Tasman	154	143	7.7%	0.9%	493	460	7.2%	8	10	-20.0%
Nelson	134	133	0.8%	0.8%	407	359	13.4%	162	171	-5.3%
Marlborough	131	121	8.3%	0.8%	367	313	17.3%	63	52	21.2%
West Coast	116	110	5.5%	0.7%	281	262	7.3%	39	39	0.0%
Canterbury	2,562	2,117	21.0%	15.2%	5,425	5,141	5.5%	2,190	2,007	9.1%
Otago	820	717	14.4%	4.9%	1,992	2,012	-1.0%	432	435	-0.7%
Southland	355	275	29.1%	2.1%	905	881	2.7%	183	159	15.1%
Other	38	46	-17.4%	0.2%	140	125	12.0%	9	0	0.0%
NZ Total	16,888	15,208	11.0%	100.0%	38,809	38,443	1.0%	13,893	12,437	11.7%

EASY ONLINE APPLICATION

<60 MINUTES AVE RESPONSE TIME



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

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Make - December 2025

MAKE	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/- %	DEC'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	1,494	1,846	-19.1%	23.3%	22,402	22.9%
Mitsubishi	703	992	-29.1%	10.9%	10,815	11.0%
Mazda	378	173	118.5%	5.9%	4,920	5.0%
Suzuki	328	296	10.8%	5.1%	4,925	5.0%
Hyundai	308	183	68.3%	4.8%	4,028	4.1%
GWM	296	237	24.9%	4.6%	3,237	3.3%
Ford	287	298	-3.7%	4.5%	4,692	4.8%
MG	264	255	3.5%	4.1%	4,131	4.2%
Honda	249	402	-38.1%	3.9%	3,626	3.7%
Kia	219	584	-62.5%	3.4%	8,597	8.8%
Subaru	172	286	-39.9%	2.7%	2,306	2.4%
BYD	152	111	36.9%	2.4%	1,904	1.9%
Nissan	141	103	36.9%	2.2%	2,306	2.4%
Chery	140	0	14,000.0%	2.2%	1,032	1.1%
Volkswagen	118	130	-9.2%	1.8%	1,721	1.8%
Tesla	117	250	-53.2%	1.8%	1,592	1.6%
Mercedes-Benz	108	122	-11.5%	1.7%	1,452	1.5%
Lexus	101	139	-27.3%	1.6%	1,453	1.5%
BMW	92	156	-41.0%	1.4%	1,787	1.8%
Jaecoo	85	27	214.8%	1.3%	978	1.0%
Cupra	70	28	150.0%	1.1%	404	0.4%
Skoda	64	90	-28.9%	1.0%	958	1.0%
Omoda	63	63	0.0%	1.0%	828	0.8%
Geely	62	0	6,200.0%	1.0%	224	0.2%
Audi	56	72	-22.2%	0.9%	1,303	1.3%
Mini	42	92	-54.3%	0.7%	922	0.9%
Land Rover	42	60	-30.0%	0.7%	1,088	1.1%
Volvo	36	9	300.0%	0.6%	534	0.5%
Mahindra	36	16	125.0%	0.6%	377	0.4%
Dongfeng	27	0	2,700.0%	0.4%	52	0.1%
Porsche	24	5	380.0%	0.4%	495	0.5%
Zeekr	20	0	2,000.0%	0.3%	51	0.1%
Peugeot	18	30	-40.0%	0.3%	433	0.4%
Isuzu	16	15	6.7%	0.2%	203	0.2%
Leapmotor	15	2	650.0%	0.2%	299	0.3%
KGM	13	46	-71.7%	0.2%	337	0.3%
Jeep	13	12	8.3%	0.2%	245	0.3%
Polestar	11	16	-31.3%	0.2%	473	0.5%
Yamaha	6	3	100.0%	0.1%	25	0.0%
Ineos	6	2	200.0%	0.1%	48	0.0%
Fiat	6	6	0.0%	0.1%	67	0.1%
Jaguar	4	7	-42.9%	0.1%	185	0.2%
BAIC	4	0	400.0%	0.1%	4	0.0%
GMC	3	0	300.0%	0.0%	42	0.0%
Others	13	20	-35.0%	0.2%	486	0.5%
Total	6,422	7,184	-10.6%	100.0%	97,987	100.0%

New Passenger Vehicle Sales by Model - December 2025

MAKE	MODEL	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/- %	DEC'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	RAV4	903	994	-9.2%	14.1%	11,295	11.5%
Mitsubishi	ASX	339	237	43.0%	5.3%	4,970	5.1%
Mitsubishi	Outlander	235	135	74.1%	3.7%	4,309	4.4%
Hyundai	Tucson	216	43	402.3%	3.4%	1,841	1.9%
Ford	Everest	216	179	20.7%	3.4%	3,324	3.4%
GWM	Haval H6	197	108	82.4%	3.1%	1,815	1.9%
Toyota	Yaris Cross	122	85	43.5%	1.9%	2,018	2.1%
Suzuki	Swift	113	149	-24.2%	1.8%	1,825	1.9%
Suzuki	Fronx	109	0	10,900.0%	1.7%	1,118	1.1%
MG	ZS	108	117	-7.7%	1.7%	1,971	2.0%
Mazda	Mazda3	107	13	723.1%	1.7%	752	0.8%
Mazda	CX-5	102	63	61.9%	1.6%	1,609	1.6%
Mitsubishi	Eclipse Cross	99	601	-83.5%	1.5%	1,030	1.1%
Honda	Jazz	95	56	69.6%	1.5%	940	1.0%
Toyota	Corolla Cross	93	105	-11.4%	1.4%	1,476	1.5%
Subaru	Outback	85	168	-49.4%	1.3%	1,126	1.1%
Jaecoo	J7	85	27	214.8%	1.3%	978	1.0%
Toyota	Corolla	84	131	-35.9%	1.3%	1,953	2.0%
Chery	Tiggo 4 Pro	78	0	7,800.0%	1.2%	702	0.7%
BYD	Sealion 6	78	33	136.4%	1.2%	715	0.7%
Toyota	Land Cruiser Prado	77	201	-61.7%	1.2%	1,668	1.7%
Tesla	Model Y	74	127	-41.7%	1.2%	1,284	1.3%
Mazda	CX-30	71	14	407.1%	1.1%	739	0.8%
Nissan	Ariya	70	2	3,400.0%	1.1%	86	0.1%
Honda	HR-V	69	91	-24.2%	1.1%	845	0.9%
MG	MG3	68	86	-20.9%	1.1%	1,024	1.0%
GWM	Haval Jolion	67	66	1.5%	1.0%	881	0.9%
Toyota	Yaris	59	85	-30.6%	0.9%	1,050	1.1%
Suzuki	Jimny	59	72	-18.1%	0.9%	896	0.9%
Toyota	Highlander	58	15	286.7%	0.9%	1,161	1.2%
Nissan	X-Trail	57	66	-13.6%	0.9%	1,272	1.3%
Geely	Starry EM-i	55	0	5,500.0%	0.9%	113	0.1%
Hyundai	Santa Fe	52	34	52.9%	0.8%	788	0.8%
Volkswagen	Tiguan	49	46	6.5%	0.8%	782	0.8%
MG	HS	48	37	29.7%	0.7%	736	0.8%
Cupra	Terramar	44	0	4,400.0%	0.7%	176	0.2%
Tesla	Model 3	43	123	-65.0%	0.7%	308	0.3%
Omoda	C5	43	53	-18.9%	0.7%	616	0.6%
Kia	Stonic	40	55	-27.3%	0.6%	1,258	1.3%
BYD	Sealion 7	40	0	4,000.0%	0.6%	337	0.3%
Subaru	Forester	40	74	-45.9%	0.6%	561	0.6%
Subaru	Crosstrek	40	31	29.0%	0.6%	492	0.5%
Kia	EV5	36	18	100.0%	0.6%	276	0.3%
Honda	e:N1	33	0	3,300.0%	0.5%	171	0.2%
Toyota	bZ4X	33	23	43.5%	0.5%	192	0.2%
Others		1,633	2,621	-37.7%	25.4%	34,508	35.2%
Total		6,422	7,184	-10.6%	100.0%	97,987	100.0%

Major revamp for dealership

The team at Simon Lucas Mitsubishi has celebrated the opening of its redeveloped dealership in Auckland.

The facility in Wairau Valley on the North Shore boasts a bigger area to house the marque's full range and an overhanging upstairs showroom has been added to enhance displays.

To mark the project's completion, owner Simon Lucas hosted a special event at the end of November for key clients, lease companies, Mitsubishi Motors NZ (MMNZ) executives, staff and project partners. It was followed by a three-day sale with exclusive offers and giveaways.

"This redevelopment has been a long time coming and we're proud to unveil a space that reflects the exceptional experience we want to provide," says Lucas.

"Our team and customers showed tremendous patience while we operated from temporary facilities, so we are excited to welcome everyone into a modern, spacious and fully revitalised dealership.

"Living and working locally has always been important to me. We believe in supporting our community. This investment reflects our commitment to the North Shore and our customers."

The redeveloped premises of Simon Lucas Mitsubishi in Wairau Valley



Tony Johnston of MMNZ, second from right, Simon Lucas, centre right, and team members



The revamped interior

Warren Brown, chief executive officer of MMNZ, adds: "This transformation is a testament to the dealership's commitment to delivering outstanding service and strengthening the brand.

"Simon and his team have consistently demonstrated passion, professionalism and dedication to

their community. This facility sets a high benchmark and we're proud to stand alongside them."

Lucas' connection to Mitsubishi spans more than 30 years. He began his career at the marque's head office in Porirua near Wellington where he supported national dealer operations.

He later became dealer principal of Kirk Motors in Auckland before realising his long-held ambition to be owner of his own dealership, buying what's now known as Simon Lucas Mitsubishi.

The redevelopment follows the company opening a service and parts centre in Silverdale in mid-2024 as the Northern Corridor rapidly expands. It's strategically located one kilometre from SH1 and by major thoroughfares.

MARQUE'S RECORD YEAR

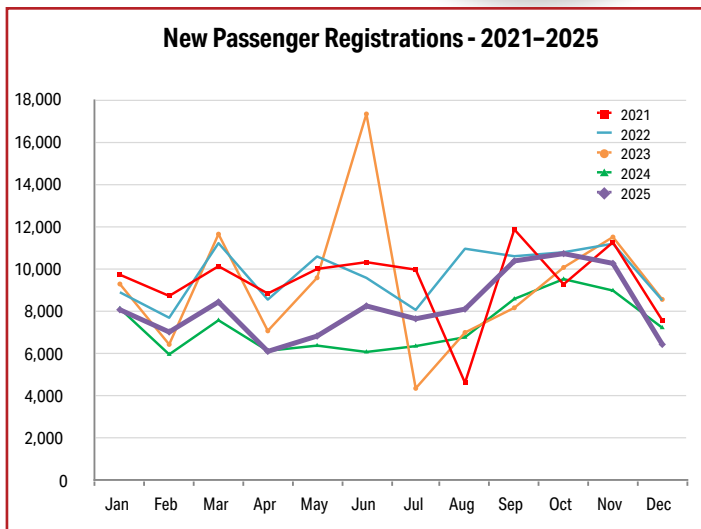
Lexus NZ notched up its strongest annual result with 1,453 deliveries to place second in 2025's largest luxury-car segment – one unit ahead of Mercedes-Benz and behind BMW, which had 1,787 registrations.

Andrew Davis, vice-president, says: "Achieving another annual record in a tough market speaks to the trust customers place in the brand. It's also a testament to the commitment of our Lexus teams."

Last year, Lexus opened new and refurbished dealerships in Wellington, east Auckland and Newmarket. It also extended its electrified offering with the NX and RX available as plug-in hybrids, and the all-new RZ has just landed. Looking ahead, the brand aims to grow further with the latest iteration of the ES. 📍

Toyota out front

New passenger-vehicle sales came to 6,422 last month for a year-on-year fall of 10.6 per cent from 7,184 in December 2024. The Toyota RAV4 was the best-selling model with 903 registrations. It was followed by Mitsubishi's ASX with 339 and its Outlander on 235. The Hyundai Tucson and Ford Everest were tied with 216. Predictably, December's number-one marque was Toyota with 1,494 units. Second spot was claimed by Mitsubishi with 703.



MAKE	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/- %	DEC'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Full battery electric	578	839	-31.1%	9.0%	6,871	7.0%
Plug-in hybrid electric	421	691	-39.1%	6.6%	4,848	4.9%
Non plug-in petrol hybrid	2,734	2,885	-5.2%	42.6%	39,081	39.9%
Petrol	2,216	2,293	-3.4%	34.5%	38,903	39.7%
Diesel	473	459	3.1%	7.4%	8,284	8.5%
Others (includes non plug-in diesel hybrid, fuel cell)	0	17	-100.0%	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	6,422	7,184	-10.6%		97,987	

Visitor numbers boost rentals

Rental companies are feeling optimistic about the peak season with much-improved tourist levels anticipated.

“Some great numbers are returning” as operators see some relief after the past few years and a quiet winter in 2025.

“Many overseas markets are starting to rebound and return in greater numbers,” says Ben McFadgen, chief executive officer of the Rental Vehicle Association.

“We’re not quite back to pre-pandemic levels yet, but we are getting close.”

With more international visitors arriving and more Kiwis travelling over the warmer months, popular

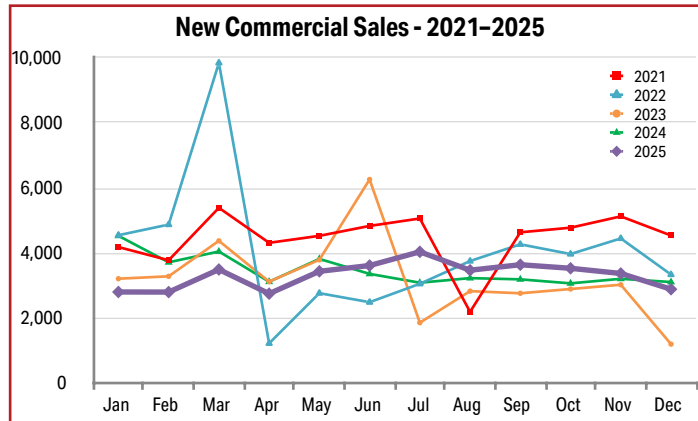
destinations are now noticeably busier and routine summer maintenance means road cones will appear.

McFadgen adds: “With everyone out enjoying the country, we’re

asking drivers to slow down and take extra care.

“Worrying speeds have been recorded in Canterbury, central Otago and the Mackenzie Basin. Police are aware of what’s

happening and will be keeping a close eye on it. Speeding puts you and others at risk. It also impacts New Zealand’s reputation as a safe place for visitors. At the end of the day, everyone’s trying to get somewhere so take a breath and enjoy the journey.”



OWNERSHIP CHANGE

The Ingham Motor Group has taken over the Central Motor Group Ford dealerships in Rotorua and Taupo.

The deal marks a major expansion of Ingham’s footprint.

“We’re thrilled to welcome Ingham as new custodians of our dealerships,” says Annaliese Atina, managing director of Ford NZ.

“Ingham’s commitment to

New Commercial Sales by Make - December 2025

MAKE	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/- %	DEC'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Ford	877	1,579	-44.5%	30.4%	10,983	27.5%
Toyota	464	508	-8.7%	16.1%	10,617	26.6%
Mitsubishi	287	179	60.3%	10.0%	3,280	8.2%
Nissan	266	73	264.4%	9.2%	2,500	6.3%
BYD	132	18	633.3%	4.6%	1,882	4.7%
LDV	129	61	111.5%	4.5%	1,389	3.5%
Fiat	122	86	41.9%	4.2%	605	1.5%
Isuzu	99	121	-18.2%	3.4%	1,621	4.1%
Fuso	97	18	438.9%	3.4%	586	1.5%
GWM	70	16	337.5%	2.4%	550	1.4%
Mercedes-Benz	68	80	-15.0%	2.4%	981	2.5%
Hino	31	30	3.3%	1.1%	514	1.3%
Iveco	27	33	-18.2%	0.9%	386	1.0%
Volkswagen	25	95	-73.7%	0.9%	530	1.3%
Ram	21	23	-8.7%	0.7%	223	0.6%
Factory built	21	5	320.0%	0.7%	56	0.1%
Scania	17	28	-39.3%	0.6%	351	0.9%
Chevrolet	16	13	23.1%	0.6%	210	0.5%
Kia	15	0	1,500.0%	0.5%	340	0.9%
Suzuki	12	2	500.0%	0.4%	89	0.2%
Others	88	130	-32.3%	3.1%	2,173	5.5%
Total	2,884	3,098	-6.9%	100.0%	39,866	100.0%

New Commercial Sales by Model - December 2025

MAKE	MODEL	DEC'25	DEC'24	+/- %	DEC'25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Ford	Ranger	790	1,474	-46.4%	27.4%	9,681	24.3%
Toyota	Hilux	307	424	-27.6%	10.6%	8,152	20.4%
Mitsubishi	Triton	287	179	60.3%	10.0%	3,279	8.2%
Nissan	Navara	266	73	264.4%	9.2%	2,500	6.3%
Toyota	Hiace	147	63	133.3%	5.1%	2,064	5.2%
BYD	Shark 6	132	18	633.3%	4.6%	1,882	4.7%
LDV	Deliver 9	99	23	330.4%	3.4%	513	1.3%
Fiat	Ducato	88	86	2.3%	3.1%	561	1.4%
Ford	Transit	76	105	-27.6%	2.6%	1,256	3.2%
GWM	Cannon	70	16	337.5%	2.4%	550	1.4%
Isuzu	D-Max	68	53	28.3%	2.4%	927	2.3%
Mercedes-Benz	Sprinter	45	68	-33.8%	1.6%	815	2.0%
Fiat	Scudo	34	0	3,400.0%	1.2%	41	0.1%
Factory built	Geely	21	0	2,100.0%	0.7%	29	0.1%
Iveco	Daily	18	28	-35.7%	0.6%	271	0.7%
Ram	1500	18	23	-21.7%	0.6%	205	0.5%
Kia	Tasman	15	0	1,500.0%	0.5%	340	0.9%
Isuzu	N Series	14	33	-57.6%	0.5%	325	0.8%
Isuzu	F Series	14	25	-44.0%	0.5%	290	0.7%
Volkswagen	Amarok	14	53	-73.6%	0.5%	247	0.6%
Others		361	354	2.0%	12.5%	5,938	14.9%
Total		2,884	3,098	-6.9%	100.0%	39,866	100.0%

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◀ quality brands and service aligns with Ford's values."

Trent Ingham, Ingham's managing director, adds: "As a 100 per cent Kiwi-owned and family-operated business with more than four decades of experience, we are deeply committed to communities we serve." The two franchises now trade as Ingham Ford Taupo and Ingham Ford Rotorua.

JOINT VENTURE ONLINE

Trade Me has teamed up with CarExpert.com.au to launch CarExpert NZ (CENZ) early this year. The partnership will make researching new vehicles easier by providing consumers with access to independent reviews.

"This joint venture will bring together the strength of Trade Me's audience with CarExpert's proven expertise," says Brendan Hall, head

of Trade Me Motors. "The constant influx of models can make buying a new car feel overwhelming. Our aim is to make this process easier.

"We've invested in CarExpert because of its success in Australia. Its content engages with millions of Aussies every month."

Founded in 2020 by Alborz Fallah, Anthony Crawford and

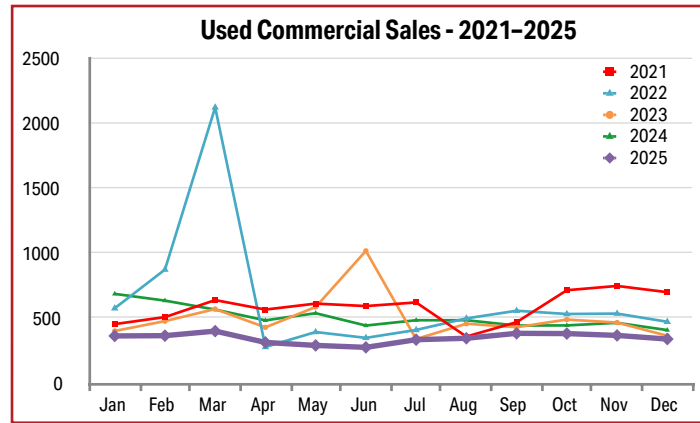
Paul Maric, CarExpert has become one of Australia's most influential automotive brands.

Fallah says: "We've always believed consumers deserve transparency, trust and independent advice when buying a new car."

CENZ's content will be syndicated across multiple

platforms including its own website, Trade Me and Stuff.

Halls adds: "Dealerships and manufacturers will benefit from this partnership that will attract and inform Kiwis, driving valuable leads straight to them. This is an exciting opportunity to be an attractive channel for dealers and brands to market offerings."



RANGER TOP MODEL

There were 2,884 new commercials registered in December for a year-on-year decrease of 6.9 per cent from 3,098.

The Ford Ranger was the top-selling model with 790 units. Toyota's Hilux was second with 307 and Mitsubishi's Triton was third on 287.

There were 339 used commercials registered last month, down by 18.3 per cent. ☹

Used Commercial Sales by Make - December 2025						Used Commercial Sales by Model - December 2025								
MAKE	DEC '25	DEC '24	+/- %	DEC '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE	MAKE	MODEL	DEC '25	DEC '24	+/- %	DEC '25 MKT SHARE	2025 YEAR TO DATE	2025 MKT SHARE
Toyota	127	186	-31.7%	37.5%	1,709	41.1%	Toyota	Hiace	100	124	-19.4%	29.5%	1,265	30.4%
Ford	52	49	6.1%	15.3%	268	6.4%	Ford	Roller Team	29	0	2,900.0%	8.6%	29	0.7%
Nissan	44	68	-35.3%	13.0%	792	19.1%	Nissan	NV200	20	6	233.3%	5.9%	232	5.6%
Fiat	18	13	38.5%	5.3%	61	1.5%	Fiat	Ducato	18	13	38.5%	5.3%	58	1.4%
Isuzu	17	25	-32.0%	5.0%	232	5.6%	Isuzu	Elf	14	16	-12.5%	4.1%	140	3.4%
Hino	16	13	23.1%	4.7%	267	6.4%	Ford	Ranger	11	9	22.2%	3.2%	115	2.8%
LDV	13	2	550.0%	3.8%	96	2.3%	Hino	Dutro	10	9	11.1%	2.9%	205	4.9%
Mitsubishi	9	10	-10.0%	2.7%	211	5.1%	Nissan	Caravan	10	12	-16.7%	2.9%	153	3.7%
Suzuki	8	6	33.3%	2.4%	79	1.9%	Toyota	Regius	9	26	-65.4%	2.7%	96	2.3%
Daihatsu	8	9	-11.1%	2.4%	78	1.9%	Daihatsu	Hijet	8	9	-11.1%	2.4%	77	1.9%
Volkswagen	5	5	0.0%	1.5%	37	0.9%	Suzuki	Carry	8	6	33.3%	2.4%	79	1.9%
UD Trucks	4	1	300.0%	1.2%	28	0.7%	LDV	T60	7	1	600.0%	2.1%	62	1.5%
Chevrolet	3	5	-40.0%	0.9%	41	1.0%	Nissan	NV350	7	37	-81.1%	2.1%	249	6.0%
Volvo	2	0	200.0%	0.6%	8	0.2%	Toyota	Hilux	7	8	-12.5%	2.1%	75	1.8%
Renault	2	0	200.0%	0.6%	10	0.2%	Toyota	Dyna	6	14	-57.1%	1.8%	154	3.7%
Mercedes-Benz	2	1	100.0%	0.6%	28	0.7%	Fuso	Canter	6	8	-25.0%	1.8%	147	3.5%
Mazda	2	6	-66.7%	0.6%	48	1.2%	Hino	Ranger	5	2	150.0%	1.5%	42	1.0%
Iveco	2	1	100.0%	0.6%	19	0.5%	Chevrolet	G10	5	1	400.0%	1.5%	24	0.6%
Holden	2	4	-50.0%	0.6%	24	0.6%	Ford	Transit	4	30	-86.7%	1.2%	47	1.1%
Peugeot	1	2	-50.0%	0.3%	8	0.2%	Nissan	Vanette	3	1	200.0%	0.9%	60	1.4%
Others	2	9	-77.8%	0.6%	113	2.7%	Others		52	83	-37.3%	15.3%	848	20.4%
Total	339	415	-18.3%	100.0%	4,157	100.0%	Total		339	415	-18.3%	100.0%	4,157	100.0%

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Crossover claims Kiwi crown

Surge in stock

Imports of new cars in December came in at 9,010. This was up 29.7 per cent from 6,949 units in the same month a year ago and 6.3 per cent higher than 8,480 in November.

Registrations of 6,422 new passenger vehicles were completed last month, which was 10.6 per cent lower than 7,184 in December 2024. It was also down by 37.3 per cent from November's total of 10,239.

The numbers have resulted in the stock of new cars still to be registered increasing by 2,588 to 68,267.

Daily sales – as averaged over the previous 12 months – stand at 268 units per day, up from 239 a year ago.

December's results mean stock at-hand has climbed to 254 days if sales continue at the current rate, although that's below the 301 achieved in the same month of 2024.

Toyota NZ continues to go “from strength to strength” by notching up record sales in 2025. For the 38th year in a row, it was this country's best-selling marque with 33,019 registrations.

It was the RAV4 that “stole the show”, no longer just being the most popular passenger vehicle but also securing the top spot as the country's number-one model on 11,295 units.

The next generation of this model will reach our shores this year with a refreshed design and better fuel economy, as well as a plug-in hybrid (PHEV) in the line-up for the first time.

Other top 10 new vehicles for Toyota in 2025 included the Hilux with 8,152 registrations and Hiace on 2,064, according to NZTA data.

The company is also a significant importer of used stock

from Japan with a focus on hybrids. In 2025, it sold 10,871 pre-owned Toyotas directly or via its franchise network.

Tatsuya Ishikawa, chief executive officer, says: “We know New Zealand's shift to lower emissions will require a range of practical solutions to meet the needs and lifestyles of customers.

“This is why we champion a multi-powertrain pathway by offering hybrids, the fuel-efficient GR performance range, PHEVs, BEVs and emerging hydrogen technologies.

“This broad portfolio keeps mobility affordable, accessible and fit for purpose for the full range of needs across New Zealand while enabling progress towards a cleaner future.”

This year will see Toyota NZ launch several new models.

The new-generation Hilux and sixth-generation RAV4 are expected to get here in 2026's first half. The updated Corolla Cross, including an all-wheel-drive GR Sport, has arrived with early orders being delivered.

Ishikawa says the marque's guiding principle is to make ever better cars that bring enjoyment to customers and this principle is embedded in Toyota's strategy, which focuses on technologies and innovations to enhance driver involvement.

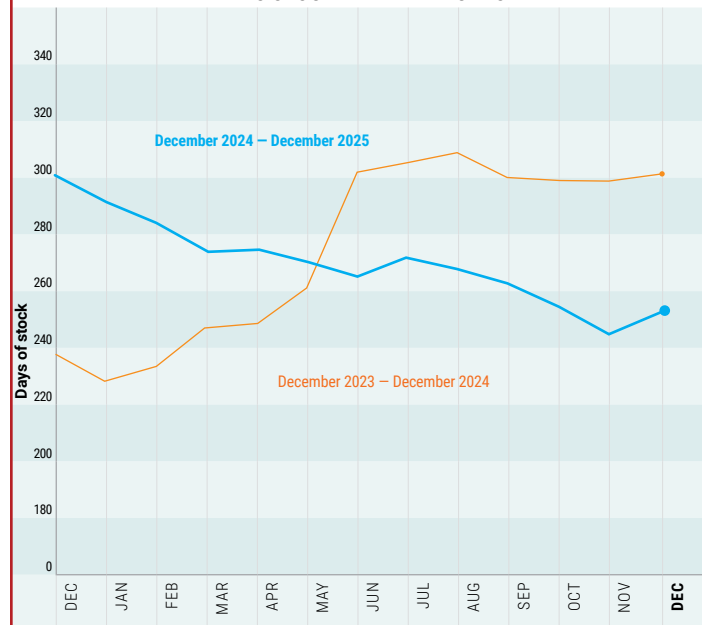
The recently announced GR GT is a “clear example of this in action”. Harnessing Toyota's sports-car pedigree and engineering teams behind the Lexus LFA, it focuses on lightweight materials including aluminium and carbon fibre-reinforced plastic panels.

“The GR GT is the ultimate

Dealer stock of new cars in New Zealand

	CAR SALES		VARIANCE	STOCK	DAILY SALES - 12-MONTH AVERAGE	DAYS STOCK AT HAND
	IMPORTED	REGISTERED				
Dec '24	6,949	7,184	-235	72,060	239	301
Jan '25	5,756	8,052	-2,296	69,764	239	292
Feb '25	5,682	6,991	-1,309	68,455	242	283
Mar '25	6,951	8,408	-1,457	66,998	244	274
Apr '25	6,421	6,081	340	67,338	244	276
May '25	5,708	6,804	-1,096	66,242	246	270
Jun '25	8,391	8,226	165	66,407	252	264
Jul '25	10,822	7,612	3,210	69,617	255	273
Aug '25	7,892	8,087	-195	69,422	259	268
Sep '25	9,729	10,358	-629	68,793	264	261
Oct '25	9,352	10,707	-1,355	67,438	267	253
Nov '25	8,480	10,239	-1,759	65,679	271	243
Dec '25	9,010	6,422	2,588	68,267	268	254
Year to date	94,194	97,987				
Change on last month	6.3%	-37.3%		3.9%		
Change on Dec 2024	29.7%	-10.6%		-5.3%		
	MORE IMPORTED	LESS SOLD		LESS STOCK		

DAYS STOCK IN NZ - NEW CARS





Staff at Farmer's service facility in Tauriko



The centre for fleet and private clients

◀ expression of our 'race cars into road cars' mission," explains Ishikawa. "It's a pure GR born from racing and honed through the cycle of 'drive, break, fix' to create a machine that's an extension of the driver."

The company's Let's Go Places brand vision, meanwhile, reflects "commitment to people, communities and innovation, and our role in keeping mobility safe, inclusive and in reach for all Kiwis".

Ishikawa says connecting to communities is core to the brand's success here. Every store has local organisations it supports with funding, vehicles or voluntary work. "And sport has a way of weaving us together. Through our partnership with NZ Rugby, we stand with the teams in black – the All Blacks, Black Ferns and Sevens."

SERVICING EXPANDS

Farmer Autovillage has opened a new satellite service centre to cater for Tauranga's expansion south of the city.

The all-marques facility in Whakakake Street, Tauriko, has been developed for private and fleet customers.

It offers a full range of services including warrants of fitness, mechanical repairs, windscreen repair and replacements, and a dedicated tyre centre.

Henry Clarke, service manager, is supported by senior service adviser Sharn Wickett, concierge Mason Sutherland and parts adviser Aidan Winch.

The technical team includes Paul Loots, Frikkie Steenberg, Hennie Cronje, Nigel Cook, Hiram Africa and Jordan Dowse.

Combined, they have more than 70 years' experience.

The centre is fully equipped for servicing EVs and hybrids, while customers' courtesy options include loan vehicles, shuttle services, and e-bikes and scooters.

For those preferring to wait on-site, there's a lounge with wi-fi and coffee.

The site is also home to Farmer Autovillage's motorhome sales and service, which has relocated from Hewletts Road, Mount Maunganui.

LANDMARK REACHED

BYD has officially surpassed 10,000 vehicle sales in New Zealand since launching here in 2022.

It says the achievement reflects the growing demand for sustainable and innovative electric vehicles in the market. ☺

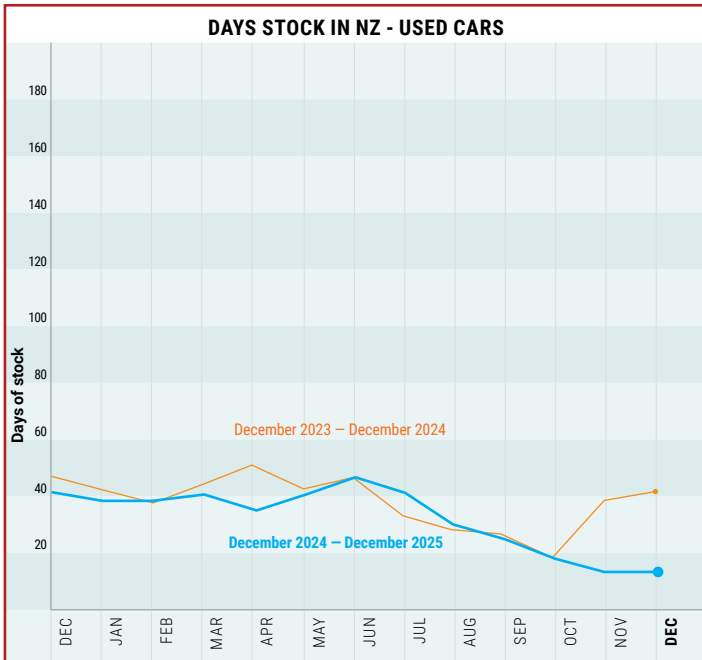
Import levels up

There were 6,734 used cars imported last month, an increase of 18.3 per cent from November when 5,693 units crossed our border. The latest figure was also up by 1.4 per cent from 6,642 in December 2024.

Some 6,708 units were registered last month, which was the second-lowest monthly total of 2025. The number was 5.9 per cent lower than 7,127 registered in the same month of 2024 and down 1.1 per cent from 6,781 sales in November.

The 26 more used cars imported than registered last month ended a run of five consecutive falls and took unregistered stock on dealers' yards or in compliance shops to 3,301 units.

This was 69.7 per cent lower than the 10,883 a year ago but up 0.8 per cent from 3,275 at the end of November. Average daily registrations for December were 233 compared to 268 a year ago.

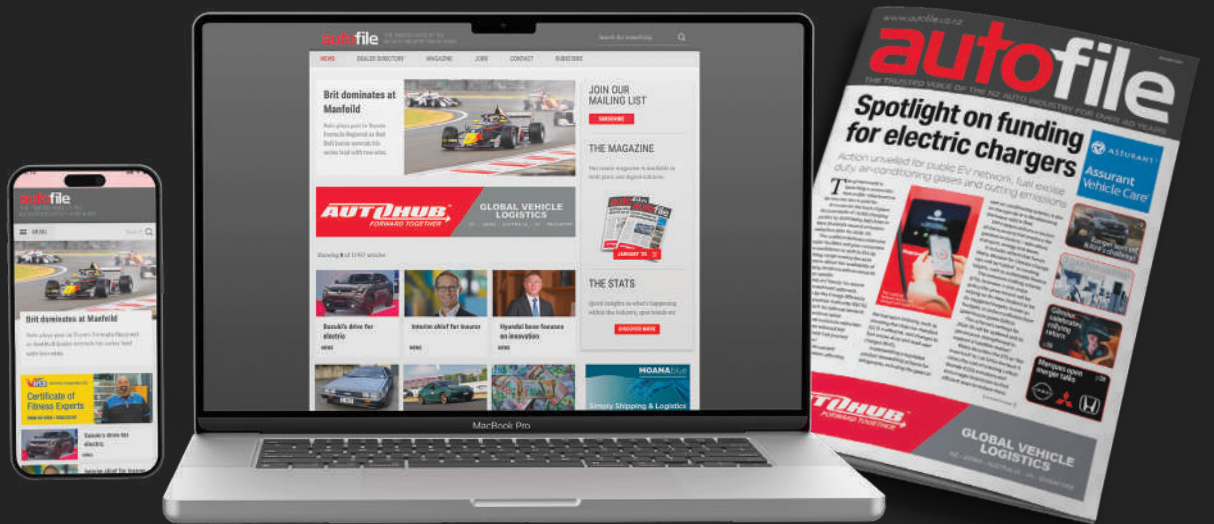


	CAR SALES			STOCK	DAILY SALES -12-MONTH AVERAGE	DAYS STOCK AT HAND
	IMPORTED	REGISTERED	VARIANCE			
Dec '24	6,642	7,127	-485	10,883	268	41
Jan '25	6,667	7,370	-703	10,180	263	39
Feb '25	6,602	6,787	-185	9,995	258	39
Mar '25	7,615	7,267	348	10,343	253	41
Apr '25	4,917	6,437	-1,520	8,823	247	36
May '25	8,457	7,263	1,194	10,017	243	41
Jun '25	7,756	6,806	950	10,967	240	46
Jul '25	6,772	8,064	-1,292	9,675	238	41
Aug '25	5,108	7,472	-2,364	7,311	236	31
Sep '25	5,666	7,067	-1,401	5,910	235	25
Oct '25	5,462	7,009	-1,547	4,363	234	19
Nov '25	5,693	6,781	-1,088	3,275	234	14
Dec '25	6,734	6,708	26	3,301	233	14
Year to date	77,449	85,031				
Change on last month	18.3%	-1.1%		0.8%		
Change on Dec 2024	1.4%	-5.9%		-69.7%		
	MORE IMPORTED	LESS SOLD		LESS STOCK		

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