



## Industry insights

THE NUMBERS ARE IN

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



Well, it was a lacklustre start to the year in dealership land.

There were 75,863 new vehicles sold in January, down 4.8 per cent from the same time last year.

Passenger vehicle sales fell by 2,853 vehicles or 15.3 per cent, while SUV sales fell by 1,947 or 4.7 per cent in January 2022. The only segments which recorded growth were light commercial vehicles – up 4.4 per cent, and heavy commercial vehicles – up 10.9 per cent.

New vehicle sales were down in all states/territories, except for Tasmania which recorded sales growth of 15.4 per cent.

Ongoing shortages of microprocessors and other components continue to affect automotive supply chains, along with shipping constraints that delay the delivery of new vehicles to dealers and consumers.

Electric vehicles (EVs) continue to sell well with 620 sold in January 2022 – 109.5 per cent growth – as are plug-in-hybrids with 307 sales. Petrol vehicles were the only fuel type to show a sales decline in January, falling by 12.3 per cent.

It's early days, but there are economic fundamentals underpinning these subdued results. Apart from the supply constraints affecting the market, there are also inflationary pressures weighing in on new vehicle purchases, with the Import Price Index for motor vehicles rising by 4.3 per cent.

The consumer price index also rose by 3.5 per cent in the December quarter, due to rises in automotive fuel costs. These inflationary pressures may be acting to dampen consumer sales to some extent.

There is also talk of interest rates rising this year, coupled with an upcoming federal election, which may be causing uncertainty for consumers.

I wonder what February results will bring...

Data source: FCAI

Prepared by Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce



# IMPENDING ARRIVAL

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT [CARS@NEWS.COM.AU](mailto:CARS@NEWS.COM.AU) OR PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

**I'm interested in the new Honda HR-V due soon. Do you know its release date, how many models will be in the range and if prices will increase?**

Murray Hourigan, email  
The HR-V small SUV is Honda's best-selling model so the new one is of huge importance. A Honda Australia spokesperson told me: "There will be multiple grades and powertrains on offer at launch when it arrives in the first half of 2022, including a hybrid version." Bank on a 1.5-litre petrol engine for the base model and the hybrid – as with Toyota's RAV4 – being the popular choice. No prices confirmed, but reckon on more than the current HR-V's \$31,300 starting point. All Hondas have fixed national drive-away prices. Unlike the new Civic the 2022 HR-V will come in "multiple grades" but "there will be a focus on premium specification and high-series grades." No cheapo entry-level, in other words.

### SUPPLY CHAINS

**Re Toyota spare wheel prices, last November my Yaris Cross Hybrid suffered a damaged rim after an altercation with a truck. Toyota advised my panel beater there were no spare rims in the country and one would be delivered by mid-December. This was amended to late January, then late February, but more likely March. I lost patience and bought four aftermarket rims for less than Toyota's \$1284 for one. Toyota not ensuring a reasonable number of spares reflects badly to we loyal customers.**

John Withers, email  
Four months is a long time to wait for an overpriced spare wheel – you did the right thing buying aftermarket. While new car production

delays and empty dealer showrooms dominate the headlines, factory shutdowns and delivery delays also, of course, affects spare parts. Toyota, same as other brands, has been badly affected with understandable Covid issues so it's best not to judge them too harshly. Except on that ludicrous price for a single rim.

### TACKY NO MORE

**Re 'Way too tacky' I had the same sticky plastic problem on the driver's side window ledge of my Jeep Grand Cherokee WK. I'd recommend Meguiar's Ultimate Protectant Dash & Trim Restorer. It left a hard renewed surface on the trim.**

Hussein Briedis, email

### BRAKE PAD MIRACLES

**After Reading Greg Dalton's tales of woe with his BMW I wonder if owning a Euro car is worth the inner glow they give owners? Premature brake pad and disc wear seems common with high replacement charges. I bought a boringly reliable Toyota LandCruiser Altitude new in 2012, it's done 160,000km and its original brake pads are not even half worn.**

Harry Taylor, email  
Are your pads made of kryptonite, Harry? Incredible longevity. On the warm glow front, my 20-year-old BMW does give me the fuzzies as it wafts along in leathery-cosseting silence. But I do question our relationship when it comes to parts and repair bills.

### ELECTRIC CHARGE

**I'm curious about the price of charging an electric car at public charge points. They never seem to mention cost.**

Patricia Woolcock, email  
Prices vary wildly. Some electric cars (EVs) get free Chargefox network charging, depending on model. With Audi it's six years; Jaguar and some BMWs and Mercedes give five; Lexus and Porsche three and Nissan one. Testing EVs, I've paid from



## WHAT CAR OF THE YEAR?

Just wondering when your 'Car of the Year 2021' Hyundai Ioniq 5 will be available to buy? It's hard to fathom a car of the year when it's not even available. Maybe the upcoming Ford Ranger should have got the nod? It's not here yet but that doesn't appear to be a determining factor anymore.

Chris Hellmitt, email  
Yep, fair point. Biggest loser is the Australian buying public not able to get into an Ioniq 5; closely followed by Hyundai Australia missing out on probably thousands of sales. Our Car of the Year testing is based on new cars introduced and sold over the past 12 months. So the Ioniq 5 qualified, even if today you can only register your interest rather than buy one. Other in-demand models are likewise suffering. The Skoda Kamiq – our 2020 winner – is no longer listed on Skoda's online ordering page, while 2019 champ the Toyota RAV4 has been the poster child for waiting lists. Poor availability, as annoying as it is, doesn't mean the car isn't a worthy winner.

19c per kWh up to 60c per kWh using public chargers, buying 250km of range for between \$15 and \$45. Big variance. Ultra-fast chargers are pricier but fill batteries much faster. In reality, the majority of EV owners charge at home, saving public chargers for emergencies or long trips.

### CRACKS IN YOUR PLAN

**Re second-hand spare wheels bought to replace space-savers, ensure they're free of buckles and cracks. If car dealers are overcharging, new aftermarket ones the correct size are usually good value at tyre and wheel retailers.**

Glen Robinson, email  
Absolutely. If it's only to be used as an emergency spare wheel who cares if it doesn't match the others on your car?

### TOTALLY UNSUITABLE

**Toby Hagon's overview of coming electric pickups makes no mention of any having a petrol-driven onboard range extender. How can any 4x4 EV be suitable for Australia without one?**

Lee Kernich, email  
They're not for everyone. Right now, a 4x4 EV isn't one for deep outback expeditions or towing a caravan 1000km in a day. Ford's new F-150 Lightning electric pickup has a range of up to 480km. The vast majority of petrol or diesel lifestyle 4x4 utes or pickups get nowhere near that per day. Australia's public fast charging network is rapidly expanding too. The massive interest and demand for electric pickups show the market deems them suitable for Australia; but more for Clovelly rather than Coober Pedy.



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