



Car sales

WE HIT ANOTHER MILLION

Geoff Gwilym VACC CEO



It's been a tough 12 months for business. Yet, 1,049,831 new vehicles sold in 2021, up 132,863 or 14.5 per cent over 2020.

All vehicle segments experienced increased growth, except for passenger vehicles, which declined by 0.2 per cent. Micro vehicles were the fastest growing segment, up 90.4 per cent, led by the Mitsubishi Mirage and Kia Picanto.

Battery electric vehicles and plug-in hybrid vehicles had sales growth of 191.1 per cent and 99.4 per cent, with 5149 battery EVs sold, compared with 1769 in 2020. This doesn't include Tesla sales, which are estimated to be more than 10,000.

Toyota was the most popular brand for the 19th year in a row, accounting for 21.3 per cent of the market and outselling its nearest rival Mazda 223,642 versus 101,119 vehicles.

The Toyota Hilux retained its top selling status for a record sixth year in a row (52,801 sales), beating the Ford Ranger (50,279).

Australia's most popular passenger car was the Toyota Corolla (28,768 sales) while the most popular SUV was the Toyota RAV4 (35,751).

Honda had a tough year finishing 15th in the sales race with a 39.5 per cent slump after switching to a fixed price model from July.

Industry expects supply shortages and shipping constraints to affect the new vehicle market during 2022, as automotive competes with other technology-based companies for access to semiconductor production. Supply normality is not expected to return until late 2022, with many buyers on waiting lists of between three to 10 months.

There is a healthy forward order bank for new vehicles, and this should translate into improved sales results in 2022.

Data source: FCAI

Prepared by Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce



WHERE IS THE LOVE?

IAIN CURRY GETS ANSWERS

WRITE TO MOTORING AT CARS@NEWS.COM.AU OR PO BOX 2808, GPO SYDNEY, 2001

I've owned my Volkswagen Touareg V8 R-Line for just over a year; it's sensational to drive, quiet and safe. VW has notified me my roadside assistance has expired and for \$140 I could purchase another year. You'd think a \$150,000 luxury vehicle with five years warranty would include roadside assist for more than a year? If I don't renew and I break down, does VW or the owner have responsibility for getting the vehicle to a service centre?

Bruce O'Neale, email

The owner does. As with warranties, the length of complimentary roadside assist should be considered when buying a car. If your Touareg's serviced at an authorised VW dealer you receive 12 months of Service Initiated Roadside Assistance (SIRA). It should be free, but the fine print states: "Volkswagen Dealers may charge a service fee to activate your SIRA membership." Chat with your VW dealer about this before forking out that \$140 - you'll need that money to fuel that V8 if you use it properly!

LOW ON GAS

My Ford Falcon runs only on LPG. I love my car but BP here on the Sunshine Coast is discontinuing supply and the two Shell stations already have. Why? LPG is a cleaner energy than both petrol and diesel.

Michael Turner, email

The main users of LPG were taxis, but demand has plummeted as the taxi industry has moved to hybrid Toyota Camrys. Private owners of LPG cars are ever diminishing, and while LPG produces lower CO2 emissions than petrol or diesel as you say, it is less efficient so you need to burn more. For new or revamped servos, electric vehicle charge points will be more relevant than fitting or retaining LPG pumps. Download the Fuel Map app, which shows your nearest fuel stations. It can be customised to only show those selling LPG. There are still many on the Sunshine Coast.

MODERN FAKERY

I bought a new Subaru XV which was supposed to have a leather steering wheel and leather seats. This was half true. The steering wheel started to flake so I think it is "el cheapo" bonded leather, while the only leather on the seat is the part you sit on. I've since bought a top grain leather steering wheel cover to stitch on. Just like "oils ain't oils" - leather ain't leather.

Bernie Rodway, email

Bonded leather, leatherette, leather-appointed, pleather, synthetic leather, faux leather ... the list goes on. Car brands even have their own names for it: Mazda calls its MazTex and BMW's is SensaTec, giving you the fuzzies as it's an "animal-free leather option." We're often told this fake stuff is harder wearing and easier to clean than real dead cow leather. Subaru says its seat trim is "leather accented" on top 'S' grade XV's like yours, but the steering wheel should be genuine leather. Many Subaru owners have reported flaking steering wheels and received replacements under warranty so you could also try. As a warning for all, hand sanitiser and steering wheels aren't a happy combination.

BUMPS IN THE ROAD

Re the Range Rover owner with cracked suspension bushes, does he slow down for speed bumps? Many drivers don't as you can barely feel them inside some 4x4s, but it's still damaging the suspension.

David Bebe, email

Good point. Speed bumps may encourage some drivers to slow down but others swerve around or fly over them. The stopping and starting means more air pollution. They also damage and break suspension parts (more environmental waste), slow emergency vehicles and are a hazard for cyclists. The road toll was up in 2021 over the previous year. Surely someone has a better solution than speed bumps and speed cameras?

PLAYING THE FOOL

Disappointing to see you guys trying to justify the outrageous Australian price for the new Chevrolet Corvette when it's \$60,990 in the US for the base model. Your comments

supporting the price only make you look foolish.

Charlie Beecham, email

I reckon I quantified the Corvette's \$144,990 Aussie price rather than supported it. A 2022 Corvette Stingray's base price in the States is \$62,195 - \$86,500 in our dollars. Australian Corvettes are far better equipped, and we must add about another \$13,000 courtesy of our daft Luxury Car Tax.

NO COMPARISON

Re the new Corvette, comparing it to an Italian supercar is like comparing a Harley-Davidson motorcycle to an electric bike. They may compete on 0-100km/h times but they're ranked as one of the least reliable cars in the world. Make sure when you're low flying in one of these bombs you're wearing a safety harness and parachute.

Norm Warren, email

Italian supercars have their reliability concerns as well.



FOUR WHEELS GOOD?

If a car model is rated to tow 1500kg as both a front-wheel-drive and all-wheel-drive, which would be easier to tow a 1500kg trailer on normal roads?

Domini Cutroni

Every towing question has been endlessly debated around Australia's caravan parks so I bet this one will fire up some opposing opinions. I'm daring to suggest that in normal conditions they'll each tow as well as the other, but the all-wheel-drive will use slightly more fuel. Where there's poor traction - be it snow, dirt road or a boat ramp for instance - an all-wheel-drive is your friend.

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