



# P-plate backlash

## Mercedes-Benz leads fresh protest against novice-driver car ban

By NEIL McDONALD

**DAIMLERCHRYSLER** Australia/Pacific has called for an industry-wide review of a NSW Roads and Traffic Authority list banning P-plates from driving supercharged and turbocharged cars, which it describes as flawed.

The company is at the forefront of an importer-led protest over the NSW rules, which could be used as a template for other states.

The managing director of Mercedes-Benz passenger vehicles, Horst von Sanden, last week sent a two-page letter to the NSW Minister for Roads, Joseph Tripodi, calling for the "illogical situation" in NSW to be addressed.

"Mercedes-Benz would be more than happy to facilitate industry-wide consultation on this issue in view of the fact that many other brands share the view that the current basis for the prohibition list in NSW is flawed," Mr von Sanden wrote in the letter, a copy of which has been obtained by GoAuto.

"We will be writing to other manufacturers and

importers formally this week and look forward to meeting with you in an open and honest fashion to develop a safer and more relevant list of cars that novice drivers should be restricted from driving."

The move side-steps the automotive industry's peak body, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, which as GoAuto reported last week had come under fire from some importers for not doing enough to tackle specific issues.

Mr von Sanden told GoAuto this week that the FCAI had taken a position that it was not its responsibility to coordinate any industry-related protest.

"I've got to respect that," he said, adding that he did not want to waste energy in discussing the issue with the

FCAI when the car manufacturers could organise their own protest.

He also said one manufacturer had offered its support even though it did not sell supercharged or turbocharged vehicles.

The FCAI is on record for hitting out at the NSW ban, which its chief executive Peter

Sturrock this week described as "clumsy and hastily cobbled together".

The chamber has also renewed its call for a national approach to licensing laws related to learner drivers.

However, Mr Sturrock took issue with some importers who believed the FCAI was not doing enough.

"It's been widely discussed at board level and among the importers and we have circulated all the material related to the issue to all members, manufacturers and importers, since it arose in June," he said. "Nobody disagrees with what we've done."

As a result of GoAuto's report last week, the FCAI has re-distributed all relevant material on the P-plate issue – and other matters – to its members.

Continued next page



Horst von Sanden

**Mazda Oz boost**  
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## website in a box

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# P-plate backlash

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Mr Sturrock said it was often the case that government bureaucracies moved slowly and some importers, used to quick commercial decisions, neglected to realise that the government process "does take a long time".

"Having said that though, the members do acknowledge that they've had all this material and perhaps some haven't read it very closely," he said.

In addition to Mercedes-Benz and Chrysler, importers Volvo, BMW and Audi are known to be supportive of an industry-wide discussion.

Last week, the FCAI raised the issue of P-plate drivers in a submission to the Victorian government on road safety at a transport ministers meeting in Melbourne.

Among its key recommendations were a curfew on night-time driving and longer licensing processes for learners. It also made it clear that it did not favour bans on the type of vehicles provisional licence-holders could drive in Victoria.

Mr Sturrock said the NSW ban was implausible and hastily put together and ignored the fact that many supercharged and turbocharged vehicles often had other safety equipment like anti-lock brakes, airbags and electronic stability control systems.

"The FCAI thinks that there are a range of technologies on newer vehicles, particularly in the last four or five years, and it would be grossly unfair and unwise to be saying that young drivers should not be able to drive those more recent vehicles with these features when the alternative would be to force them to go back to older vehicles," he said.

"It would be folly to be contemplating some of those vehicles and forcing people to go and find



**NSW P-plate holders are allowed to drive Daihatsu's Copen turbo, launched in 2003 with the help of teen idol Sophie Monk.**

another vehicle that could be older and far less safer."

Mr Sturrock also described the power-to-weight ratio method Victoria employs to classify banned cars for P-plate holders as not ideal.

As a result of ongoing FCAI concerns, the NSW RTA and NSW state government had been receptive to requests by companies to consider altering the banned vehicles on the restricted list, he said.

Already some have been exempted, like most DaimlerChrysler-imported Smart models and the two-seater turbocharged Daihatsu Copen.

However, the RTA's exemption process has widely been criticised by importers as bureaucratic red tape.

"We had said that it was very clear the list was developed by a bureaucratic process that has given little thought to logic or common sense and that the catch-all concept that NSW had put in place was clumsy and unfair," Mr Sturrock said.

The FCAI supports a national approach to learner driving protocols, rather than often conflicting state-based regulations as well as higher skill sets and training.

The Government's discussion paper said that

it favoured various measures including extended learning periods for P1 and P2 licence-holders, "which we think is entirely fair and reasonable", Mr Sturrock said.

However, the FCAI was concerned about one Victorian government view that it did not favour limiting passengers or late-night driving restrictions.

"Despite the fact that again in the paper it clearly says that there have been positive road safety benefits in Canada, the US and New Zealand where there has been a restriction on passenger numbers and late night driving," Mr Sturrock said.

It was unacceptable for the government to consider issues of this type based on clear evidence but then say "we're not going to use it because it doesn't suit us", he said.

"In our view you cannot have it both ways. You can't be seeking evidence and basing your restrictions on clear evidence, and if you like, market information by saying it doesn't suit us."

The FCAI is now seeking a meeting with the Victorian Transport Minister, Peter Batchelor, to discuss its submission.



**Peter Sturrock**

**Ad chaos looms – next page**

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# Ad chaos looms

## ACCC chief threatens multi-million dollar fines over misleading adverts

By JOHN MELLOR

**THE** head of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), Graeme Samuel, is losing patience over the issue of misleading pricing in car advertising and wants to launch prosecutions "within weeks".

He has warned that he wants the issue "cleaned up before the end-of-year sales".

"It has gone beyond a final warning," he said.

With penalties of \$1.1 million for corporations and \$220,000 for individuals, advertising campaigns lined up to run through to the end of the year will have to be revisited. He said he understood there were advertising lead times but two weeks leeway was all the industry would get.

He said he had lost patience with the car industry because after a year he still finds advertisements coming across his desk that "blatantly contravene the law".

"I am staggered at the level of non-adherence to the rules, absolutely staggered," he said.

Mr Samuel said that when the ACCC issued guidelines to the industry late last year, it was especially concerned with car companies and dealers advertising recommended retail car prices as the price of the car "plus on-road costs and dealer delivery charges".

The ACCC said this was deceptive and misleading because buyers were left in the dark



**ACCC guidelines suggest this ad may be in breach of the Trade Practices Act.**

about the final price of the car.

Mr Samuel told GoAuto that \$19,990 drive-away, no more the pay is "best practice".

"At a minimum, the actual dealer delivery fee should be included by dealers and distributors should state the range of dealer delivery fees charged."

Not stating the dealer delivery fee was likely to contravene the Trade Practices Act, he said.

According to the FCAI, the industry and the ACCC have been in talks for about 18 months, with the industry explaining the difficulties when delivery fees vary from region to region and that different states have different taxes.

But Mr Samuel let fly at the industry saying that time had run out to comply.

He said that he was not just responding to complaints from consumers but was also responding to complaints from car companies which were doing the right thing while their competitors continued to flaunt the law.

Mr Samuel said there was no reason why individual dealers should not publish their delivery

charges and stamp duty in their advertising. Car companies must disclose the range of dealer delivery charges, he said.

The outburst from Mr Samuel appears to have taken the FCAI by surprise.

Its chief executive officer, Peter Sturrock, said there have been long-standing discussions with the ACCC over the complexity of price disclosure.

"We've had a number of meetings between our organisations and various senior officers of the ACCC," he said.

"The ACCC have commented to us that they have appreciated our explanation of how industry works and how those issues are undertaken and why there are differences between metro and country dealers in terms of delivery prices ... (and) registration charges ... (and) between private and business registration costs.

"Many of those issues they were simply unaware of until we explained that to them," he said.

Mr Sturrock said he would wait for Mr Samuel to write to the FCAI before commenting further.



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# ESP plea

## MUARC calls on industry, government to fast-track vehicle safety systems

By NEIL McDONALD

**THE** head of the Monash University Accident Research Centre, Professor Ian Johnston, has urged government and the car industry to do more about fast-tracking new safety technologies into vehicles.

Speaking at a road safety forum in Melbourne last week, Professor Johnston said the Victorian government in particular, as one of the state's biggest fleet buyers, could be including proven safety systems in its vehicles such as electronic stability control (ESP), but was failing to do so.

He said that if the government mandated such systems they would then flow into the used-car market more quickly when the fleet vehicles were turned over.

"Considering they turn over their cars every couple of years, there is a very rapid lead into the market," he said. "Now, that hasn't happened yet."

"At the same time, the industry is not doing all it can to promote these technologies into the market."

The forum also heard that the government would not commit to rebates for car buyers who include the latest-generation safety equipment in their cars.

This is despite strong evidence worldwide that



ESP and related electronic systems save lives.

The news came as Bosch, one of the world's leading original equipment makers of active and passive safety systems, released details of its next-generation ESP systems that it will roll out over the next four years.

Bosch estimates that currently only about 10 per cent of Australian cars offer ESP.



Ian Johnston

The Transport Accident Commission's general manager of road safety, David Healy, told the forum that the TAC had been looking at incentives and other ways of educating young drivers about the value of systems such as stability control, but as yet no decision had been made on things as specific as registration or insurance rebates.

"I certainly cannot commit to insurance rebates," he said.

Mr Healy said that although it was an issue the TAC supported, as yet there was no government policy on the matter.

"I agree it's an issue we need to come to terms with," he said. "It makes sense because correctly

targeting incentives can generate considerable community benefit."

He believes market forces will also drive the push for inclusion of newer safety systems in cars.

"The challenge is to generate demand for these technologies," he said.

Mr Healy said the next phase was to look at ways "we can provide incentives both to industry to produce such vehicles at a reasonable cost and also look specifically at ways we can up the ante in terms of consumer interest in safety".

According to TAC figures, in Victoria one person is killed each day and 46 people are injured because of a road accident. Every four days, someone suffers a debilitating brain injury, while every 17 days someone suffers quadriplegia or paraplegia.

Mr Healy said road trauma was a global problem, not just isolated to Australia.

"By 2020 road trauma will be the third leading cause of death worldwide, from its current position of 11th," he said, quoting World Health Organisation figures.

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# Gold for 380

## Mitsubishi's new sedan is named as Australia's best large car

By MARTON PETTENDY

**MITSUBISHI'S** new 380 sedan has this week picked up the most coveted gong within the state motoring clubs' 2005 Australia's Best Cars awards.

Awarded collectively by the NRMA, RACV, RACT, RACQ, RAASA, RACWA and AANT – which together represent more than 6.3 million members – this year's Best Cars awards named Mitsubishi's Magna replacement as Australia's best large car.

The 380 was one of nine new winners across the 12 Best Cars categories, highlighting the number of quality new models available to Australian new-car buyers.



Mitsubishi 380

"This is good news for a local manufacturer with a lot at stake, having spent over \$600 million on the development of a family sedan," said Best Cars chief judge Ernest Litera. "It is great to see the level of commitment into Australian-built cars, as it ultimately flows on to the consumer."

Best Cars judges named Mitsubishi's 380 as the smoothest, quietest Australian-built car, with unconvincing interior finish and ergonomics failing to stop it winning the large-car award over Hyundai's new Sonata and Ford's BAII Falcon.

Hyundai's recently facelifted Getz hatchback was named best small car, with Ford's better-handling but noisy Fiesta claiming second and Volkswagen's quality Polo third.

The Blue Oval also picked up the best mid-

size car (under \$28,000) award with Focus winning ahead of the Mazda3 Maxx Sport and Holden's Astra.

Last year's \$750 price drop helped Honda's Accord Euro to win the medium (over \$28,000) award over Volkswagen's Golf, with Subaru's reigning Liberty third.

Honda's new Odyssey also picked up the people-mover award for the second year running, ahead of Toyota's Avensis and Mitsubishi's Grandis.

Volkswagen's Golf GTI became the first front-drive winner of the Best Sports Car Under \$57,000 award, besting the facelifted version of Subaru's thrice-winning Impreza WRX and Mitsubishi's pricier Lancer Evo.

An engine upgrade lifted the Mercedes-Benz CLK350 coupe from being a three-time bridesmaid to Best Sports Car Over \$57,000 award winner. Porsche's Boxster and BMW's M3 filled out the top three thanks to shorter warranties and higher depreciation.

**FULL DETAILS: [CLICK HERE](#)**

### 2005 Australia's Best Cars

Best Small Car	Hyundai Getz 3dr man (\$14,490)
Best Mid-Sized Car <\$28K	Ford Focus CL 4/5dr man (\$20,990)
Best Mid-Sized Car >\$28K	Honda Accord Euro sedan (\$35,500)
Best People-Mover	Honda Odyssey Luxury (\$45,290)
Best Sports Car <\$57K	Volkswagen Golf GTI man (\$39,990)
Best Sports Car >\$57K	Mercedes CLK350 Coupe Eleg (\$118,600)
Best Luxury Car <\$57K	Subaru Liberty 3.0R sedan (\$50,990)
Best Luxury Car >\$57K	Audi A6 3.0 TDI quattro sedan (\$97,900)
Best Large Car	Mitsubishi 380 sedan auto (\$35,990)
Best All Terrain 4WD	Land Rover Discovery 3 TDV6 SE (\$73,650)
Best Luxury 4WD	Lexus RX330 Sports (\$73,200)
Best Recreational 4WD	Ford SX Territory Ghia AWD (\$53,950)

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# Mover and shaker

## Mazda Australia now wields power and influence over future models

By BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

**MAZDA** Australia's unprecedented growth in Australia over the past six years has earned it a high level of credibility within Mazda Motor Corporation, to the point where it now has influence on future model decisions.

"Mazda Australia now has a say on future model developments," said Mazda's director and senior managing executive officer in charge of marketing, sales and customer service worldwide, Daniel T Morris.

"It has earned credibility over the last few years ... to the point where (they) have a voice in the development stage (of future products)," he said.

Speaking to media in Melbourne last week, the senior Mazda executive said he was impressed with the Australian subsidiary's progress over the past six years, which has seen its market share double to around 6.8 per cent.

In fact, former Mazda Australia managing director Malcolm Gough, who was the company's first non-Japanese boss (from 1997 to 2004), is known within the corporation as "the father" of the next-generation B-series light truck.

Mr Gough is now based at Mazda's head office in Hiroshima, Japan, and is the executive officer and general manager of the overseas sales division



**Daniel Morris with the new MX-5 and current B-Series**

for the company worldwide.

Mr Morris would not divulge details of the B-series (or any other future Mazda model), other than to say that buyers would be "pleasantly surprised" with the vehicle.

However, he did reveal that the next B-series was wholly developed by Mazda in Japan, using the same resources it puts in models like the Mazda3.

Mr Morris' tour in Australia is part of a global mission to assess the various needs of Mazda's key distributor outposts worldwide.

"(I'm here to) get a lot of the smaller voices heard (so as to) to build a future business case for specific markets' needs," he said. "I'm getting out and listening to what is on people's minds ... as well as what is on dealers' minds."

One issue brought up last week was the lack of a spare tyre in the new MX-5, which seems to have

dismayed Australia's Mazda dealer network.

"The dealers have very strongly voiced their wants," Mr Morris said.

He said the point had been noted for future Mazda vehicles coming to Australia but that it was not a priority for a model as focused or specialised as the MX-5.

Mazda has earned its independence within its major shareholder, the Ford Motor Company, helped along by a few senior ex-Mazda staff such as Lewis Booth and Mark Fields, both of whom have become high-level personnel within the Ford world.

"They strengthen our relationship with Ford ... create better synergies ... and recognise Mazda's needs," Mr Morris said.

**Truth or dare – next page**

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# Truth or dare



Senku (left) and  
MX-Crossport concepts

## Mazda reckons it will maintain worldwide sales momentum by 'taking risks'

By BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

**MAZDA** intends to sustain its rapid sales growth in Australia and overseas by providing desirable vehicles that are daring, focused and "a cut above".

These are the sentiments of Mazda Motor Corporation's director and senior managing executive officer in charge of marketing, sales and customer service worldwide, Daniel T Morris.

In Australia last week as part of a worldwide "tour" of Mazda distributors, Mr Morris said Mazda had found the "blueprint" to achieving sales success.

He said that the right product at the right time had been the key factor of Mazda's growth over the last three years.

"The Mazda3 is an attractive design, a fun ride and is priced right," he said. "But what we have to do now is to keep it fresh."

Mr Morris said that a lot of companies were good at achieving success but many had difficulty maintaining it "because they don't take risks, they become complacent".

Production for Mazda's star small car is currently running at full capacity.

The recently released MX-5 is also selling strongly, while the Mazda5 (Premacy replacement not slated for Australia) is performing well in Japan and "looking promising in the United States and Canada".

Mr Morris said the Chinese market was also booming with 52 per cent growth this year over 2004 levels.

Key launches for the Japanese brand next year will be the replacements for the Tribute small

4WD (possibly to be called CX-5) and the B-series light truck. At least one of these vehicles is expected to make an appearance at the Detroit auto show in January.

The new-generation MPV, shown at the recent Tokyo motor show, is also due during 2006.

The mid-sized CX-7 five-seat 4WD wagon also begins its rollout during 2006, with Australia getting it in early 2007. This will be a crucial vehicle for Mazda, particularly in the United States where overall sales have been down one per cent this year.

Mazda may also be considering a smaller light-4WD wagon based on the next-generation Mazda3 platform.

Mr Morris said that there was still plenty of scope for growth in the SUV (sports utility vehicle) sector in Europe, but only for the more compact C-segment varieties such as the VW Golf-derived Beuvin due in 2008.

If it comes to fruition, such a Mazda (CX-3 is a likely name) could also be on sale at the same time as the VW.

But before that you can expect a new Mazda6.

Due to arrive in 2007, this car is crucial for Mazda's growth in the US, since it will take on the all-conquering Toyota Camry and Honda Accord. Look for a larger, longer-wheelbase car, as the next 6 needs to look bigger outside and be

more spacious inside.

Mazda admits that one of its challenges is to maintain the current model's sporty and compact good looks, which could all-too-easily be sacrificed at the altar of appeasing American tastes.

On the subject of sporty cars, Mr Morris says that the RX-8's four-seater and four-door capabilities make it more practical and usable than most sports cars, therefore maintaining its showroom appeal as it ages.

The company is also cautious as to how it proceeds with its MPS/MazdaSpeed performance division.

Calling it "zoom-zoom on steroids", Mr Morris said the company had yet to determine whether turbocharging and all-wheel drive would be key signature elements for MPS. Both are used on the Mazda6 MPS.

An MPS version of the 3 has been widely speculated since prototypes of one brandishing bigger wheels, flared guards and a bonnet scoop were photographed last year.

And as far as developing niche models such as a petrol-electric hybrid model to take on the highly successful Toyota Prius, Mr Morris said: "We are a small company with limited resources ... so we don't have that luxury or that curse (to contend with)."

Growing pains – next page

### WHAT'S COMING

New MPV	mid/late 2006
New Tribute/CX-5	late 2006
New B-series	late 2006
CX-7	March 2007
Mazda3 MPS	early 2007
Mazda6 MkII	mid-2007
Mazda2 MkII	late 2007/early 2008
CX-3 small 4WD	late 2008
Mazda3 MkII	early 2009

  
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# Growing pains



Penfold Mazda, Burwood (Vic)

## Mazda seeks better after-sales service as record sales run continues apace

By BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

**IMPROVED** customer service and repeat business is considered vital to Mazda's long-term existence in Australia.

The company's sales surge here over the past few years has seen its market share double to around 6.8 per cent.

This year Mazda is aiming for a record 67,000 new vehicle sales, 7000 more than was forecast at the start of 2005 and more than 12,000 units ahead of last year.

But the company has also highlighted a number of pressing needs.

Mazda is keen to maintain a high level of dealer after-sales service and commitment in order to keep buyers satisfied.

To that end, it is seeking more high-quality

"frontline" staff to better deal with people who walk into, or use, a dealership.

Storage facilities for stock also need to be improved. This not only involves the greater volume of new vehicles going through the facilities, but also used cars/trade-ins and spare parts.

Increased new-car sales has also raised the need for better servicing facilities, be it extra space for the work, improved customer waiting and lounge areas and a more efficient ability to deal with greater demand.

Mazda's overall "car park" (the number of its vehicles on the road) in Australia has effectively doubled since 2000.

The number of Mazda dealerships will not grow in metropolitan areas, but there are already

increases in "near-metro" sites, as evidenced by the recent opening of an outlet north of Perth, which is one of the largest Mazda dealerships in Australia.

The company is also keen to achieve a higher number of repeat purchases, which – for a value-for-money brand – is tricky as buyers often move up to prestige and luxury marques as they age and move through life.

"Historically people go in and out of the brand ... so loyalty rates are in fact relatively low for us," said Mazda Australia managing director, Doug Dickson.

He cited consumers changing their house or job, moving interstate or even getting other people to buy their vehicle for them as reasons why it is difficult to keep in touch as the years go by.

"Recognising the multi-purchase patterns so as to track buyers (is the key)," Mr Dickson said.



Doug Dickson



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# Simply red

Ferrari puts cashed-up 'communists' high on its hit list



By NEIL McDONALD

**FERRARI** has embarked on a campaign to make the prancing horse one of the most recognised brands in the Asia-Pacific region.

It has specifically created a sales unit to target the emerging wealth in the region, capitalising on one of the fastest-growing markets globally.

According to the new Ferrari sales and marketing director for the region, Mario Micheli, the region, including Australia, will become more important in meeting the company's strategic goals.

Apart from Australia, Mr Micheli is also responsible for Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, Brunei and the Philippines.

In Australia last week for the Ferrari-sponsored Classic Adelaide, Mr Micheli said that despite the cultural diversity of the region, prospective Asian buyers understood the company's philosophy of building genuine sports cars.

He pointed to the fact that many wealthy Hong Kong-based Ferrari owners preferred to drive their cars rather than opting for chauffeurs.

"We have customers who just want to add a Ferrari to their garage," he said. "But we also

have some customers genuinely passionate about driving Ferrari, some of whom drive up to 30,000 kilometres a year."

Last year Ferrari sold 660 cars in the Asia-Pacific region, about 13 per cent of the factory's global sales of 4975.

In the same period it sold 42 cars in China, a figure that has almost tripled this year alone, with strong interest in the 612 Scaglietti.

Mr Micheli said the challenge of expanding into the Asia-Pacific region was to maintain the marque's high degree of exclusivity.

About 30 per cent of all Ferraris are exported to the United States and several models have long waiting lists.

For example, there is currently a 12-month wait for the 12-cylinder 575M Maranello coupe.

Although reluctant to put a figure on prospective sales targets, Mr Micheli said China could become a significant player even though the US, Germany and Italy would still represent the bulk of sales.

China is expected to become the fifth- or sixth-largest world market over the next few years. Ferrari is opening more dealerships and currently has 10 throughout the country.

The supercar-maker, like other luxury marques, aims to drive sales as growth in the Western markets plateaus.

"In China for the past 11 years we sold 10 cars and this year we've sold 60," he said. "The Chinese buyer understands the Ferrari philosophy."

China has an allocation of 90 Ferraris this year.

Mr Micheli said Ferrari believed it was time to build a different focus in the region "because we do believe there is a huge potential there that's not been really understood".

The general manager for Ferrari in Australia, Kevin Wall, said he was looking forward to the marque playing a greater role in the region, which in turn would mean the Italian car-maker would look at specific ways of leveraging the brand in Australia.

Mr Wall said Ferrari's involvement in the Classic Adelaide rally, an event that is growing in stature internationally every year, was one way to broaden its footprint. This year more than 300 competitors took part.

In October, Ferrari opened new dealerships in Sydney, Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo as well as the Chinese cities of Guangzhou, Chengdu, Xiamen and Beijing.

Ferrari is now represented in 52 countries and exports 90 per cent of the cars it builds.



**Mario Micheli**

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# Full speed ahead

**Audi confirms R8 supercar as Aussie outfit prepares for 10 new models within 12 months**



Le Mans quattro concept

By BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

**AUDI** Australia is set to release at least 10 new models over the next 12 months, and several more soon after that, with an emphasis on turbo-diesel economy and high-performance brand building.

These cars follow the complete overhaul of Audi's core passenger model line-up conducted over the past 16 months and will be precursors to the brand-leading R8 supercar, which last week was officially confirmed for production from the second quarter of 2007.

Based on the Le Mans quattro concept shown at the 2003 Frankfurt motor show, the R8 will be built from a new 28 million euro (US\$32.8m) production line at Audi's Neckarsulm plant in Germany.

"Through the R8 we are looking to build on our successes in motorsport and carry them over to series production," said Audi AG chairman and chief executive, Martin Winterkorn. "This model represents Audi's very own interpretation of sportiness."

In the meantime, Audi Australia is looking to maintain momentum by adding some glamour with new model variants based on the new-generation A3 and A6 and

the significantly upgraded A4 and A8.

In the past month, the company launched an upgraded S4 sports sedan and A4 2.0 TDI turbo-diesel sedan, along with the A3 Sportback 2.0 TFSI. The latter combines running gear from the hot-selling VW Golf GTI – a 147kW 2.0-litre turbo four-cylinder engine – with the Haldex part-time AWD drivetrain.

Looking ahead, diesels will play the bigger role in Audi's sales plans. Next March the 250kW A8 4.2-litre TDI V8 arrives, espousing a world-leading 650Nm of torque from its bi-turbo common-rail diesel engine.

The fitment of the A6's 3.0-litre TDI V6 in the A4 sedan will follow it. Available in quattro all-wheel drive, its 150kW engine pumps out 450Nm of torque from 1400rpm – 20Nm more than the 309kW RS4 due out from April 2006. The latter is a six-speed manual-only model that will initially be offered in sedan-only guise.

Next up is the revised A4 Cabriolet sporting the B7-series facelift. Due on sale from June 2006, it replaces the last Audi without the company's controversial single-frame grille styling.

June is also when the A3 1.9 TDI Sportback settles in. As an entry-level turbo-diesel delivering 77kW of power and 250Nm of torque, it should prove to be one of the series' best-selling variants. Expect mid-\$30,000 pricing.

But the big news is the Q7, a car that will finally

put Audi on par with large 4WD wagons such as the BMW X5 and Mercedes-Benz ML. Two engines are earmarked for launch – the volume-selling 150kW 3.0-litre TDI as well as the 257kW/440Nm 4.2-litre FSI V8 engine married to a six-speed automatic gearbox.

At the same time, this latter engine will also be fitted to the A8, upping its power from 246kW and 430Nm. Audi may also launch a 150kW 3.0-litre TDI V6 version of its

luxury sedan aimed at the limousine market.

It will be followed by the S8, a sportier version of the all-aluminium A8 luxury sedan unveiled at September's Frankfurt motor show.

Using a variation of the V10 found in the related Lamborghini Gallardo supercar, the 5.2-litre FSI unit develops 331kW and 540Nm, to help the S8 reach the 100km/h spot from standstill in 5.1 seconds.

The Avant wagon version of the RS4 sedan also makes an appearance from October 2006.

## WHAT'S COMING

A8 4.2 TDI V8	Mar 2006
A4 3.0 TDI V6	April 2006
RS4 sedan	April 2006
A4 Cabriolet facelift	June 2006
A3 Sportback 1.9 TDI	June 2006
A3 Sportback 2.0 TDI	June 2006
Q7	Sept 2006
RS4 Avant wagon	Oct 2006
S8	Oct 2006
A8 4.2 FSI V8	Oct 2006
Allroad	early 2007
R8	mid 2007
Q5	late 2007
A4 MkIII	early 2008
A8 MkIII	2009



A4 Cabriolet

**Good spread – next page**

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# Good spread

## Audi is confident it can sustain its sales growth Down Under

By BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

**AUDI** is aiming for another double-digit sales increase in Australia in 2006 – 5500 units, which is a step up from this year's expected 4750 total.

In 2004, 3701 Audis were registered, against 2003's record 4450 sales. By 2009, the company intends to crack the 8000-unit mark.

Audi Australia managing director Joerg Hofmann told GoAuto last week that he was pleased with his company's performance this year.

"Twenty per cent ahead of last year was the prediction (this year) but (approximately) 30 per cent is an over-achievement of our internal targets," he said. "The good thing about Audi in 2005 is that we are not just depending on one model."

Audi has tripled its A3 sales, while the core A4's volume is up 20 per cent and the A6 up 50 per cent. All have undergone wholesale changes inside the past 18 months.

Only the ageing TT sports car and the previous-generation A6-derived Allroad – both of which are nearing the end of their model cycles – have had significant sales drops. Replacements will be upon us by mid-2007.



A3 Sportback Turbo FSI

The A8 is also down, by around 16 per cent, however Mr Hofmann said that the 120 A8s he expected to find homes for this year was still a significant tally in a segment limited to 600 sales annually.



Joerg Hofmann

This car, along with the A3 and A4 from this month, will receive a sales boost with the introduction of key niche models made up of turbo-diesel and high-performance editions.

In order of appearance they are: the A3 Sportback Turbo FSI quattro, A4 2.0 TDI, S4 sedan, A8 4.2 TDI V8, RS4, A4 3.0 TDI quattro, A3 Sportback 1.9 TDI, RS4 Avant, A8 4.2 FSI V8 and the S8.

The A4 Cabriolet facelift will bring the current drop-top in line with the regular B7-series A4 range.

All are designed to sustain consumer interest in a range that is either ageing (consider the A4, notwithstanding the substantial facelift this year) or maturing (A3, A6, A8).

In particular the "S" and "RS" range, sited in

ascending order above the sporty "S-Line" series available on the A4 and TT, are charged with boosting the desirability of all Audis.

The most vital newcomer of 2006 for Audi will come in the last quarter – the long-awaited Q7, Audi's first foray into the luxury 4WD segment. "It is the most important product we have ever had for Australia," said Mr Hofmann.

The Audi boss believes that the day when his company's sales equals that of BMW and Mercedes – which recorded 14,860 and 17,489 sales respectively in 2004 – is still far away. "Ten years is a more realistic (timeframe) to reach comparable volume," he said.

Nevertheless, to help get it there Audi will release a nationwide and factory-supported used-car strategy next February.

Mr Hofmann said that branding its second-hand vehicles should go some way to addressing the misconception that Audi cars have a lower resale value than its compatriots.

Worldwide, Audi expects vehicle sales to reach the one million mark by 2008.

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**Mobil** Command Performance



**THOUGHT the motor show scene had packed away its trumpets and pensioned off its go-go girls for another year? Well think again, because Germany's Essen motor show is Europe's biggest aftermarket, motorsport and classic exhibition – and the 38th iteration kicks off this Friday, November 25.**



### **VW POLO DUNE**

**VOLKSWAGEN** has released photographs of its new Polo Dune (also known as the CrossPolo) ahead of the Essen show.

Based on a five-door Polo hatchback, the Dune has raised suspension and an interesting blend off-road and sporting styling themes. Genuine off-road ability? We don't think so.

Notable design touches include 17-inch BBS alloy wheels, butch front and rear bumpers, body and wheel arch cladding and silver-coloured roof rails and door mirrors. Interior elements include chrome-plated instrument surrounds, aluminium-look pedal covers and front sports seats.

It is not likely to make it to Australia, but a VW Group Australia spokesman said "never say never".



### **NISSAN WINGROAD**

**NISSAN** has chosen this year's Essen show to publicly unveil a redesigned version of its Japanese-market Wingroad compact wagon.

Aimed at buyers with "active lifestyles", the new Wingroad features a multi-configuration interior in which the rear seats slide 120mm fore/aft and recline over 10 positions to liberate more rear-seat legroom than most compact wagons.

Further aiding interior versatility, both front seats fully recline, all seats bar the driver's can be folded flat by remote control, and the 412-litre cargo area features a washable luggage board.

Offered in both standard RX and RS guises plus an Aero sports version, Wingroad is available with either 1.5-litre or 1.8-litre four-cylinder power – the latter mated to a CVT transmission with steering wheel paddles to access its six ratios.

Wingroad's suspension is claimed to "incorporate the specifications of high-end cars", while satellite-navigation and a rear-facing camera with colour screen are also available.



### **OPEL MERIVA OPC**

**MERIVA** is Opel's answer to compact European people-movers like the Renault Scenic and the Citroen Picasso – and has become the basis for the Opel Performance Centre's fifth model.

It joins the Astra OPC (due on sale here next year badged as the HSV Astra VXR), Zafira OPC, Vectra OPC and Vectra wagon OPC.

Powered by a new 134kW 1.6-litre turbocharged four-cylinder claimed to be the most powerful in its class, Meriva OPC is touted as the world's first sports minivan. Along with a 222km/h top speed, Meriva OPC features sports suspension and adaptive headlights.

Given Holden has discontinued its mid-sized Zafira people-mover in Australia due to slow sales, Meriva is unlikely to be seen on Aussie roads, so don't hold your breath waiting for this hotted-up version.



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**HONDA** Australia will release a mildly revised Accord Euro by the beginning of next year.

Visual changes include revisions to the front and rear bumper, grille, headlights, bonnet and tail-lights, as well as redesigned alloy wheels.

There are minor alterations to the dash, instrumentation, cabin trim and colour palette, while driver's seat-position memory and MP3 audio compatibility should round out the major changes.

The 140kW/223Nm 2.4-litre i-VTEC four-cylinder engine will continue.

European Euros will gain "head-up" instrumentation (that displays speed, fuel and other information on the windscreen), voice-recognition satellite navigation and a lane-stray warning device.

However, these are unlikely for Australia, with the latter being "incompatible" with Australian roads according to a Honda Australia spokesman.

— BYRON MATHIOUDAKIS

# Euro vision



## UP CLOSE on PERSONNEL brought to you by Motor Staff



### BAYFORD TOP VIC DEALER

**THE** Bayford Group has been named the Australian Automobile Dealers Association Victorian dealer of the year at the 2005 AADA Victoria Retail Motor Industry Awards.

The group, which was founded by Dick Bayford 88 years ago, has six dealerships covering the Ford, Volkswagen and Peugeot franchises in the north and east of Melbourne.

The current managing director of Bayfords, Hugh Bayford, received the award, which was presented by the Victorian Minister for Small Business, Andre Haermeyer. Mr Bayford's son, Charles, who is dealer principal of Camberwell Volkswagen, accepted a certificate of excellence for service in a medium-sized dealership.

The Bayford parts distribution business, one of the biggest in Melbourne, was awarded a certificate of excellence in parts for a large dealership.

The joint winners of the AADA Victoria Young Achiever Awards were Amber Sara, a service technician at the Porsche Centre Melbourne, and Greg Eckfeld, a salesman at Fentree Gully Nissan.

For more details on the winners and a complete list of awards see GoAuto Professional on [www.professional.goauto.com.au](http://www.professional.goauto.com.au)



**Hugh Bayford**

### HOLDEN MARKETING MOVE

**HOLDEN** has made a couple of major changes within its sales and marketing department, appointing Philip Brook as the marketing manager for large cars and sports utility vehicles, and Teresa Basile as marketing manager of small and medium cars and light commercial vehicles.

Mr Brook was previously responsible for LCVs and SUVs, while Ms Basile was the market forward planning manager responsible for Australian-produced future vehicles. Their appointments are effective December 1. Both will report to marketing director John Elsworth.

The reshuffle follows the appointment of Holden passenger cars marketing manager, Alan Blazevic, as SA/WA zone manager earlier this month. Mr Blazevic replaced Geoff Bennett, who assumed the position of NSW/Qld zone manager following the retirement of Barry Turner after 39 years of service.

### WEBB CAST AT RACV

**INDUSTRY** types attending the 2005 Australia's Best Cars Awards at the RACV's new headquarters in central Melbourne this week might have noticed that former Holden public affairs stalwart Amanda Webb is now at the RACV where she is community relations manager.

Formerly the national manager of community

relations at Holden, Ms Webb manages the partnership between the RACV and non-profits and charities like Landcare and Berry Street Victoria.

### NEW MANN AT HYUNDAI

**HYUNDAI** Motor Co Australia has named Oliver Mann as its new marketing general manager, replacing Richard Whaite who left the company in July citing "ideological differences with senior management".

Mr Mann, who has joined HMCA from Land Rover Australia, will report to director of sales and marketing, Theo van Doore.

Mr Mann, 44, has extensive local and overseas experience with both volume and prestige automotive marques. Before to his stint as marketing manager at Land Rover, he spent two years with Volkswagen of America after more than six years in marketing and advertising managerial roles in Australia for brands distributed by Inchcape Motors, including Audi, Volkswagen and Peugeot.



**Oliver Mann**

**If you have any car industry personnel announcements, please email them to Terry Martin at [tmartin@mellor.net](mailto:tmartin@mellor.net).**

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## GoAuto latest road test

### Mazda MX-5 convertible

**MAZDA** defied early sceptics and probably surprised itself with the success of the MX-5. How, after 16 years, do you make what was once defined as a retro car remain attractive and desirable? Maybe you ensure that it continues to provide the best driving experience for the money, and maybe you don't stray from the basic principles of simplicity, and affordability, that connect you with customers. The third-generation MX-5 delivers more than its meagre price increase indicates, with more performance, better handling, more comfort and more safety, yet it hasn't watered-down the charm of the 1989 original. Rather, it's enhanced it.

**ROAD TEST: [CLICK HERE](#)**



### CAPTIVA COMING

HOLDEN'S forthcoming GM Daewoo-developed four-wheel drive wagon, known as the S3X concept car up until now, will be called the Captiva across Europe and in South Korea.

Australia? Holden has refused to confirm whether "Captiva" will be the name used here for the vehicle, which will make its production debut at the Geneva motor show in March and go on sale in Australia and other markets soon after.

Holden is still to release full details, however GM Daewoo has confirmed that the Captiva will be available with five or seven seats, in front-drive and all-wheel drive configurations, and with several powertrain options including a 2.4-litre four-cylinder, a Holden-built 3.2-litre V6 and Korean-built 2.0-litre turbo-diesel.



S3X

### BENZ DIESEL BLITZ

MERCEDES-BENZ has confirmed that it will introduce to Australia a new diesel-powered model variant over the next 12 months for the B-class and R-class people-movers, E-Class station wagon and G-class hardcore 4WD.

A B180 CDI 2.0-litre four-cylinder model and an R320 CDI 3.0-litre V6 model will arrive around June next year, followed in the third quarter by an E280 CDI estate, also with a 3.0-litre V6 oil-burner. The G-class is due around November, with Mercedes currently investigating both six- and eight-cylinder turbo-diesel engines.

### LAUNCH PAD

#### NOVEMBER:

Audi A4 2.0 TDI variant

Audi S4 V8 facelift

BMW 530d sedan variant

Lexus IS250 sedan redesign

Mercedes-Benz B-class hatch

Mercedes-Benz ML320 CDI variant

Nissan Navara utility redesign

**New model diary: [CLICK HERE](#)**

### GM AXES 30,000 JOBS

GENERAL Motors announced this week that it will slash 30,000 jobs, close four assembly plants and four stamping and powertrain plants across the United States.

The move will save \$US7 billion (\$A9.5 billion) – \$US1 billion above its previous goal – by the end of next year. However, the US crisis does not affect Holden, which had already planned to trim 1400 from its Adelaide workforce.

GM CEO Rick Wagoner said GM would also trim production at several other US plants by the end of 2008. The moves will cut production capacity by about one million units by the end of 2008, he said.

The cuts affect about a quarter of the North American factory workforce at GM and are the deepest since it closed 21 plants and axed 74,000 jobs over four years from December 1991.

Last Thursday, Mr Wagoner sent a message to employees stating that the large financial losses at the company were unsustainable but that it was not headed toward bankruptcy.

### BOND DB5 STIRS INTEREST

JAMES Bond's original 1964 Aston Martin DB5, which starred in the *Thunderball* and *Goldfinger* movies, is up for auction.

The car is being auctioned by RM Auctions in Arizona in January. It is the first time it has been offered for sale in 35 years and the auction house believes will fetch between \$US400,000 (\$A544,000) and \$US500,000 (\$A680,000).

The Aston is one of four built for the movies and sports all the Bond accoutrements, from the wheel-mounted tyre slashers to the retractable rear bulletproof screen.

It is one of several celebrity cars being offered. Another is a bulletproof 1928 Cadillac Town Sedan used by notorious gangster Al Capone.



DB5

### DUCATO GETS SHORTY

FIAT has introduced a new short-wheelbase version of its Ducato large van in Australia, priced from \$35,990. It is powered by a 81kW 2.3-litre turbo-diesel engine, uses a five-speed manual transmission, has a 1.5 tonne payload and 6.7 cubic metres of cargo space available, accessed via rear barn doors and/or a sliding door on either side of the vehicle. Standard features include air-conditioning, remote central locking, a CD stereo, electric mirrors and a driver's airbag.

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