



Coronavirus – Sao Tome dan Príncipe: COVID-19 update (20 August 2022)

Australians are buying new cars at almost the same rate as this time last year – to pre-coronavirus levels – as the industry remains hopeful the worst is behind it and there is a clear road ahead.

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Official sales figures released today by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) show new-car sales in October 2020 were down by just 1.5 percent compared with the same month the previous year, with 81,220 vehicles reported as sold versus 82,456 in October 2019.

Four of the Top 10 brands posted sales increases, as the industry grows optimistic about a market recovery.

Despite the relatively strong performance, it was nevertheless the 31st month in a row of year-on-year decline – the longest continuous slump since the Global Financial Crisis.

It was the weakest October result in 10 years – since 2010 – but it was the third-best monthly result so far this year.

Year-to-date, new-car sales are down by 18.8 percent compared to the first 10 months of 2019, with 726,111 vehicles reported as sold so far in 2020.

The state of Victoria – historically the second-biggest car market – once again recorded the nation's biggest sales slowdown, with 17,594 new cars reported as sold (versus 24,535 for the same month last year), a decline of 28.3 percent.

However Victorian dealers have reported strong interest after lockdowns eased towards the end of the month, and the early prospects of a recovery in the coming months are good.

By comparison, new-car sales in NSW were up by 6.2 percent, while Queensland was up by 11.7 percent, South Australia was up by 14.5 percent and West Australia was up by 17 percent.

The Northern Territory was up by 27.7 percent due to an increase in mining and tourism business, while the Australian Capital Territory was up by 28.1 percent, as insurance companies continued to replace motor vehicles written off in severe storms earlier this year. After leading the first six months of this year, the Toyota HiLux ute returned to the top of the monthly sales charts after being beaten by the Toyota RAV4 mid-size SUV and Ford Ranger ute for the past three months in a row.

Another sign the economy is moving again: utes filled three of the Top Six sales spots.

The new Isuzu D-Max ute finished sixth outright – its highest monthly result ever and the first time it has ranked third among its ute peers – behind the Toyota Prado four-wheel-drive in fourth and Toyota Corolla small car in fifth.

The figures show buyers continue to favor utes and SUVs; anecdotal feedback from dealers claim it is because more motorists plan to holiday at home amid international travel restrictions.

Other customers are treating themselves to a fancier car than they would otherwise buy, rather than go on an overseas holiday, say dealers.

“After a very challenging year, we are seeing ‘green shoots’ in the Australian new-vehicle market,” said Tony Weber, the chief executive of the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, in a media statement.

Mr. Weber said the results were “welcome news”. “Every state and territory except Victoria and Tasmania have seen significant growth and, given the circumstances, Victoria’s result is seen as encouraging,” he said.

“However, the green shoots that we are seeing in October give us great hope that we may begin to see further recovery during the coming months.”

Mr. Weber said Federal Government initiatives “such as a constructive budget that included the instant asset write off, along with more accessible finance for consumers, is also acting as a welcome stimulus for the industry”.

The type of cars we are buying continues to evolve. SUVs and four-wheel-drives once again represented more than half of new vehicle sales for the month (50.8 percent, after an increase of 6.7 percent) while utes and van accounted for 23.6 percent of total sales (and as a category were up by 11.6 percent).

Passenger car sales, however, shrunk to 21.9 percent of the total market, down 24.5 percent from October 2019.

Market leader Toyota posted a 14.8 percent increase in sales in October 2020 compared to the same month the prior year, reporting 19,505 vehicles as sold after revealing its dealers had written 22,500 orders last month.

Toyota maintained a comfortable lead over second-placed Mazda which also posted a sales gain (of 17.1 percent), however third-place Hyundai was hit hard, down by 20.2 percent compared to the same month last year.

Ford, which was the last number one in Australia in 1997, ranked fourth in October 2020 after posting a 17.4 percent sales increase on the back of good supply of – and orders for – its Ranger ute.

Kia rounded out the Top Five after posting a 4.8 percent increase compared to the same month last year.

Mitsubishi (down by 6.3 percent) retained sixth place for the second month in a row after ranking fifth in August and third on the monthly sales charts in July for only the seventh time in its history.

The luxury-car sector continued to reveal mixed results in October 2020.

Mercedes-Benz made it into the Top 10 for the second month in a row – finishing in 10th in October after ranking ninth in September – despite posting a monthly decline of 11.5 percent.

BMW, which had earlier in the year made a strong showing in the Top 10 after registering a large number of demonstrator models and company cars to boost its numbers, again fell outside the Top 10.

BMW finished October in 13th spot – despite a 3.2 percent sales increase – ahead of MG, Audi, Suzuki, and LDV.

Holden continues to deplete showroom stock, with just 165 vehicles reported as sold (versus 522 in September and 555 in August), as dealerships continue to remove signage ahead of the shutdown of the brand at the end of the year.

Meanwhile, our appetite for US pick-ups continued during the pandemic, and fuel economy was clearly not a factor: Ram outsold Mini and Peugeot.

TOP 10 CARS IN OCTOBER 2020

Toyota HiLux: 4444, up 26.4 percent
Ford Ranger: 4217, up 33.4 percent
Toyota RAV4: 4084, up 91.6 percent
Toyota Prado: 2207, up 45.9 percent
Toyota Corolla: 1943, down 8.2 percent
Isuzu D-Max: 1932, up 51.5 percent
Mazda CX-5: 1912, up 11.9 percent
Hyundai Tucson: 1678, down 0.9 percent
Toyota LandCruiser Wagon: 1640, up 23.8 percent
Kia Cerato: 1619, down 11.4 percent

TOP 10 CAR BRANDS IN OCTOBER 2020

Toyota: 19,505, up 14.8 per cent
Mazda: 7457, up 17.1 percent
Hyundai: 5951, down 20.2 percent
Ford: 5744, up 17.4 percent
Kia: 5304, up 4.8 percent
Mitsubishi: 4510, down 6.3 percent
Nissan: 3539, down 11.8 percent
Volkswagen: 3112, down 26.3 percent
Subaru: 2902, down 12.1 percent
Mercedes-Benz: 2288, down 11.5 percent

The market

New-car sales in October 2020 were down by 1.5 percent compared to the same month last year, with 81,220 vehicles reported as sold. It was the 31st month in a row of year-on-year decline.

Year-to-date, 726,111 new vehicles have been reported as sold, a decrease of 18.8 percent compared to the first 10 months of last year.

While sales for October 2020 were down, four of the Top 10 brands posted sales increases and market share gains as the supply of new vehicles began to return to normal after production interruptions earlier in the year.

The year-on-year decrease of just 1.5 percent in October compares to a 21.8 percent decline in September, a 28.8 percent decline in August 2020, a 12.8 percent decline in July 2020, a 6.4 percent decline in June 2020, a 35.3 percent decline in May 2020, and a 48.5 percent decline in April 2020, in the grip of the coronavirus crisis.

Last month was the lowest October result in 10 years versus the lowest September in 18 years, the weakest August tally in 23 years, the slowest July in 18 years, the worst June in

nine years, a 23-year low in May, and the lowest April result in at least 30 years.

Brands

Toyota remains the market leader for October 2020 comfortably ahead of its nearest rivals and is on track for its 18th year in a row as Australia's top-selling car brand. The Japanese car giant's sales totaled 19,505, up 14.8 percent compared to the same month last year.

Toyota's October market share increased to 24 percent, compared to 18.2 percent in September, 20.4 percent in August, 21.4 percent in July, 20.7 percent in June, 24.2 percent in May, and 26.5 percent in April. Last month Toyota represented almost one in four new vehicles sold.

Mazda secured second place with 7457 sales (up 17.1 percent) but it only had one car in the Top 10.

Hyundai finished in third place, with 5951 new cars reported as sold (down 20.2 percent)

The Toyota HiLux was the top-selling vehicle outright in Australia in October 2020, when sales of both 4x4 and 4x2 models are combined (as is industry practice).

However, the Ford Ranger 4x4 (3808) outsold the Toyota HiLux 4x4 (3406) for the month, as Toyota introduced massive price rises with its updated model.

Both utes posted big sales gains (Toyota HiLux up 26.4 percent and Ford Ranger up 33.4 percent).

Toyota filled five spots in the Top 10, with the HiLux, RAV4 (4084 sold, up 91.6 percent), Prado (2207 sold, up 45.9 percent) Corolla (1943 sold, down 8.2 percent), and LandCruiser wagon (1640 sold, up 23.8 percent).

Top 25 models for October 2020

FCAI chief executive Tony Weber said every state and territory had experienced a robust rebound except for Victoria and Tasmania. "After a very challenging year, we are seeing 'green shoots' in the Australian new-vehicle market," he said. The instant asset write-off scheme was a major contributor to the renewed vigor, along with increased activity as economies increasingly reopened outside of Victoria. The rebound underscores that an economic recovery is building in Australia, just as the Reserve Bank of Australia unleashed its own extra stimulus with a rate cut and \$100 billion bond-buying programs on Tuesday.

Ute sales in particular surged. The No.1 selling vehicle model in Australia in October was the Toyota HiLux ute, which experienced a 26 percent jump in sales to 4,444 compared with October in 2019.

The second-ranked model was the Ford Ranger ute, where sales jumped by 33 percent to 4,217. The Isuzu D-Max ute surged up the sales charts to be No.7 overall across all vehicles, with a 52 percent jump.

Across the states, Western Australian sales were buoyant and were up 17 percent, South Australia was up 14.5 percent, NSW was 6.2 percent higher and Queensland advanced 11.7 percent. Tasmania was down 16 percent.

Victorian sales were down 28.5 percent, but Mr. Weber said that the market was starting to improve.

For the 10 months ended October, new vehicle sales reached 726,111, which is 18.8 percent lower than the same time last year.

The small decline in October marked the 31st consecutive month in which the industry had experienced a sales decline compared with the previous corresponding period.

Mr. Weber said there was hope the recovery would continue to rebuild.

“Nationally, the state of industry operations is returning to normal as COVID-19 restrictions ease,” he said.

He said the federal government stimulus measures including the instant asset write-off, along with more accessible finance for consumers is helping momentum.

Electric vehicles more than doubled sales in October, albeit off a low base.

Across the market, Toyota was a clear No.1 brand, with 24 percent of overall sales, followed by Mazda with 9.2 percent and Hyundai, 7.3 percent