

FUEL PRICES DRIVE SHIFT IN BUYER BEHAVIOUR AS LOW EMISSION VEHICLE DEMAND SURGES

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The Australian Automotive Dealer Association (AADA) says March 2026 new vehicle sales data highlights a clear shift in consumer preferences, with rising fuel prices accelerating demand for electric vehicles.

New vehicle sales totalled 108,703 vehicles in March, representing a decrease of 2.61 per cent compared to February 2026 and 1.81 per cent decrease YTD compared to the same period in 2025.

Battery Electric Vehicle sales reached 15,839 units in March, up 42 per cent month-on-month and 92 per cent year-on-year, accounting for 12 per cent of total new vehicle sales so far this year.

Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle sales reached 8,215 units in March, up 40 per cent month-on-month and 40 per cent year-on-year, accounting for 7 per cent of total new vehicle sales for 2026.

Additionally, China's market share continues to increase, and Australia is now a leading market for the Chinese automotive industry.

"The AADA is seeing a clear shift in consumer preferences this month, with many buyers who may have previously been on the fence now choosing to buy an electric vehicle," said James Voortman, CEO of the AADA.

"Rising fuel prices have brought forward decisions for a lot of consumers, particularly those weighing up the long-term running costs of their next vehicle."

"The key question now is whether this is the beginning of a more sustained shift in the market, something we will only know in the coming months."

"What this month's sales figures prove is that it will be Australian consumers that dictate the pace of the transition."

"It is now more important than ever to purchase a vehicle from an authorised new car dealer given the large number of automotive brands selling new cars in Australia, and the wide range of vehicles available for sale with state-of-the-art technology."

"Dealers have been embedded in their local communities for decades, helping Australians find the vehicle that best suits their individual needs. They are also there to ensure these cars are safely maintained and that warranty, consumer law and recall obligations are upheld."

*The AADA has reviewed year-to-date VFACTS and EVC data, ranking vehicles by volume, and continues to analyse new vehicle sales by state, fuel type and market segments to monitor trends shaping the Australian market.

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For further information please contact:

Ashleigh Sykes
Communications Manager
Australian Automotive Dealer Association Ltd.
E: media@aada.asn.au
M: +61 468 450 563