EDay Life looks to CSIRO supercapacitors, Orbital engine for Chinese-built cars

By RON HAMMERTON

FLEDGLING Australian car company EDay Life hopes to become the first electric vehicle brand to offer a mass-produced vehicle with a light, compact and powerful supercapacitor battery energy storage system developed by Australian research agency CSIRO.

Melbourne-based EDay – the brainchild of former Holden Innovation director Laurie Sparke and one-time motor dealer Robert Lane – also plans to add a petrol powertrain alternative employing an advanced direct-injection fuel delivery system developed by Perth’s Orbital Corporation.

While neither system will be available when the first EDay car, the electric-powered E25, is launched in a 100-car trial in Victoria early next year, EDay is already working with the CSIRO and Orbital towards the introduction of both technologies at the earliest opportunity.

EDay’s vehicles are being developed by what is claimed to be China’s largest independent automotive designer and ‘original design manufacturer’ – an unnamed company that is said to have developed more than a third of current Chinese domestic vehicles.

EDay showed one of its prototypes – the E15 hatchback – at the Australian International Motor Show in Melbourne this month, but it has two others, the larger E25 hatchback and HS11 hybrid sports coupe concept.

The E25 – which will be the first to hit the road in Australia – is based on an existing petrol-powered five-door hatchback already on the market in China, but with styling modifications specifically for EDay.

Orbital is already working with China’s fourth largest motor manufacturer, Changan Automotive – a manufacturing partner with Ford, Mazda and Suzuki in the world’s biggest market – on a project to apply its patented FlexDI air-assisted direct-injection fuel system to a four-cylinder petrol engine to meet tighter fuel consumption rules in China.

The Orbital-Changan project, announced in May, is partly funded by a $440,413 grant from the Australian government’s now defunct Green Car Innovation Fund.

Orbital technology is set to boomerang back to Australia in EDay’s Chinese-built range of city hatchbacks that will be offered with a choice of three powertrains – electric, petrol and dedicated LPG.

“Orbital is doing brilliant stuff with their injection technology and we are waiting to pick that up as soon as it is available,” Mr Sparke said. “We start with EV and then petrol and LPG.”

Continued next page
NRMA keeps EVs moving

Australia’s first mobile electric vehicle charger hits the road in Sydney

By RON HAMMERTON

SYDNEY’S electric vehicle drivers can rest easier with the arrival of Australia’s first mobile charging unit that can give EV batteries a quick zap should drivers run out of power and become stranded.

The NRMA motoring club roadside assistance unit – using a small Honda petrol generator and a modified home wall charging unit packed into a trailer behind a motorcycle – can give a typical electric-powered car, such as a Mitsubishi i-MiEV, enough charge in 30 to 40 minutes at 15amps to get the car about 10km and to the nearest permanent charging point for a full charge.

Developed by Australian-based international battery swap company Club Assist and destined to be rolled out around the world to up to 70 motoring organisations, the mobile charger can also ramp up the charge from 15amps to 30amps, should the vehicle be capable of accepting the higher rate, to halve the charging time to as little as 15 minutes.

Club Assist is working on an even faster and more powerful mobile unit to cut the turnaround time to less than 10 minutes.

The service has been likened to a roadside assistance technician giving a stranded motorist a splash of petrol to reach the nearest service station. Until now, the only alternative has been to call a tow truck.

The NRMA has also introduced its first electric-powered roadside assistance unit, an i-MiEV, to service the Sydney CBD and surrounding areas to test the viability of such vehicles in the emergency role.

The NRMA’s head of community engagement Brad O’Hara told GoAuto the i-MiEV – complete with tools to tend to breakdowns of conventional cars – could cover about 100-110km between charges, meaning it should be on the road up to six hours a day.

As well, the NRMA is also preparing to open its first public kerbside fast-charging point for EVs, at the organisation’s operations centre at North Strathfield, in Sydney’s inner west, where drivers can ‘fill up’ for free.

The fast charger – a high-voltage level-three unit from American company Acker Wade and installed by Club Assist – is the first public unit in New South Wales and only the second in Australia after a similar installation at Mitsubishi Motors Australia’s Clovelly Park headquarters in South Australia.

The NRMA already has two level-two 30amp units for its own use, to power up its i-MiEV, at its Sydney head office car park and inside the Strathfield operations centre.

EDay looks to CSIRO supercapacitors, Orbital FlexDi

Continued from previous page

The first EDay cars will be powered by electric motors hooked up to lithium-ion batteries with a 160km range and top speed of 100km/h.

EDay says it hopes to lease the cars at a rate that is effectively half the current price of Mitsubishi’s $48,800 i-MiEV, and offer complete refurbishment – including new batteries – after two years.

“We are confident we will enter the market with a car about half the price of an i-MiEV or (Nissan) Leaf, and within a couple of years have technologies that will put us ahead of them,” Mr Sparke said.

“As soon as we get ourselves sorted out over the next five or so years, we are going to be competing in a lot of the market.”

Mr Sparke identified the CSIRO’s supercapacitor technology as one of the advances EDay hoped to introduce.

Brought to market by the CSIRO’s Sydney-based commercial spinoff Cap-XX for a range of electrical devices such as cameras and mobile phones, the hybrid supercapacitors combine battery electrodes and capacitor electrodes to halve the requirement for batteries, cutting the weight of energy storage packs for cars.

The CQES data was shared with EDay it can be used to produce a supercapacitor that can store as much as 180kWh, with a 30-minute recharge, for a car.

Mr Sparke is also looking at Orbital FlexDi’s technique to re-power a car with clean energy from solar panels or wind turbines.

EDay plans to launch its first cars in May with the CSIRO’s supercapacitors and other EDay-developed technologies, and again next year with Orbital’s flex diodes.

“People are going to want a car that isn’t just electric, or substitute, but they can plug into the solar panels and wind turbines to power their car,” Mr Sparke said.

Full story: CLICK HERE

FULL STORY: CLICK HERE
‘Bleeding from the eyes’

Carbon tax to impact on car industry profitability but not consumers: FCAI

BY RON HAMMERTON

STRONG competition from imports is expected to force Australia’s three motor manufacturers to absorb the extra cost of the carbon tax – estimated to be between $112 and $150 a car – rather than try to pass it on to customers.

The industry says the tax will further erode the profitability of the manufacturers, who are “bleeding from the eyes” due to the high value of the Australian dollar that aids importers and discourages exports.

One of them, GM Holden, already has signalled its intention to take up “issues affecting Australia’s ability to compete globally for foreign investment” directly with the federal government.

Holden and the other two manufacturers, Toyota and Ford, are expected to be included in the “top 500 worst polluters” list of manufacturers subjected to the tax that the federal government on Sunday set at $23 per tonne of carbon dioxide.

While Toyota said the tax would add $112 to the cost of each locally built Camry or Aurion, a preliminary estimate by the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) has set the burden at $150 a vehicle, for a total $30 million bill across the industry, bringing the impost on a locally made car to about $170.

“So, all up, we would say the total cost is somewhere in the order of $45 million to $50 million a year for the industry as a whole,” Mr McKellar said.

“While that might not sound a lot per car, there wouldn’t be too many brands that would be in a position to pass that on to consumers, certainly not the local manufacturers.

“They will wear that in their margins and in their reduced profitability, and that is not a good thing when it comes to competing for capital from their global parent companies.”

Mr McKellar said the FCAI had urged the government to offset the costs of the tax on local manufacturing industry and start with a nominal carbon tax of $10 or less per tonne.

Neither of these requests had eventuated in the tax package announced by the Gillard government at the weekend, he said.

Mr McKellar said initiatives to encourage the uptake of low emissions technologies by industry – also urged by the motor industry – were a positive aspect of the tax package, but those measures failed to make up for the loss of the Green Car Innovation Fund that has been killed off by the federal government.

“Any, it’s doesn’t even take us back to where we were a year ago, but we still have the additional cost coming on to industry,” he said. “Those are issues which concern us and it won’t make it any easier to secure future investment mandates here in Australia.

“The main impact of those cost increases will be to erode margins and profitability, even more so than they already are.

“It is fair to say that at the moment local manufacturers are bleeding from the eyes from the strong value of the Australian dollar and the strong competitive pressures that they face. So to add additional costs to that at this stage of the economic cycle, it is not an economic reform, it is the opposite.”

Continued next page
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Mr McKellar urged the government to reassess the impact the tax would have on industry competitiveness.

He said tax on air-conditioning gases should “go back in the melting pot for reconsideration”.

“In the next few years, the industry will be looking to replace those gases with a much lower carbon equivalent, so I think there is a technological solution there in the offing for that part of the problem,” said Mr McKellar. “To be imposing additional cost won’t speed that process, it will just add cost, and unnecessarily.

“We urge the government to revisit those issues. There needs to be an ongoing dialogue with manufacturing industry because we really do need to rethink the sort of approach that has been put forward here if we are to avoid potentially undesirable consequences.”

Toyota, Ford and Holden all said they were still assessing the detail of the package.

However, Holden said in a statement that it did not fit the government’s criteria as an ‘emissions-intensive, trade-exposed industry’ (EITE) and therefore would be eligible to only partly offset the impact under the Clean Technology Program.

“Specifically, Holden believes it will be able to apply for co-investment funding for its R&D and manufacturing initiatives to help reduce emissions and improve vehicle efficiency through the Clean Technology Investment Program, Clean Technologies Food and Foundries Investment Program and Clean Technology Innovation Program,” said the Holden statement.

Holden said it supported the need to reduce its carbon footprint, and that of manufacturing in general, and believed the compensation measures were a step in the right direction.

“However, it is important to understand how much competition there will be for funding from other manufacturing sectors,” the company said. “It is also critical to understand the extent to which the compensation package will address the competitive disadvantage imposed on local manufacturers who compete in a market where 85 per cent of new vehicle sales are imported models.

“Over the coming days we will be reviewing the details of the scheme to better understand how the package will be implemented.

“In particular, Holden will be discussing with the government the issues affecting Australia’s ability to compete globally for foreign investment.”

Ford Australia is playing its cards closer to its chest, saying it was reviewing the anticipated impact of the carbon pricing scheme.

“Once this is finished Ford will express its views through the Australian Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries,” a Ford spokesman said.

Toyota Australia president and CEO Max Yasuda said Toyota supported action on climate change, but that the carbon tax was expected to increase Toyota Australia’s manufacturing costs by up to $15 million a year – about $112 per locally manufactured vehicle.

FULL STORY: CLICK HERE
Ford Australia chief talks tough to parts-makers on climate change, carbon tax

By IAN PORTER

Ford Australia has warned local parts-makers they need to start to work immediately to offset the effects of climate change and the carbon tax or risk becoming uncompetitive and losing out to imported parts.

And the Cooperative Research Centre for Advanced Automotive Technology also stressed the need to keep improving management and production processes in order to survive what are difficult times in the industry.

Ford Australia president Bob Graziano told the annual conference of the Federation of Automotive Products Manufacturers that it was important suppliers recognised the difficulties climate change posed to both Ford and to the suppliers’ own businesses.

“Climate change is front and centre on the political stage,” Mr Graziano told the FAPM members. “I fear that, perhaps, it may not yet be front and centre on your stage.

“Climate change will impact the price of a host of energy-intensive commodities: metal, glass, plastic and fuels. All of these are inputs to your businesses, and any price changes will find their way along the supply chain.”

He warned suppliers they had to work hard to minimise any price changes caused by climate change and the carbon tax.

“It is imperative that we recognise just what climate change can mean to our businesses.”

Mr Graziano said suppliers should not wait for all the detail on climate change to emerge before taking action.

“It is a ‘now’ issue,” he warned. “How will you address the demand to reduce energy use, or commodity use by streamlining your processes? How will you enhance quality and throughput? And how will you achieve all of this without loss of competitive relativity against imported products from a wide range of developing countries?

“You need to ensure your organisations are fully committed to these programs.”

Mr Graziano said there was plenty of assistance available to suppliers and no reason not to act now.

“There are a suite of supplier development programs currently on the table (through the FAPM). These are complemented by a similar suite of programs on offer to you by the three vehicle manufacturers.”

He said all suppliers bar none could benefit from the help that is available, just as all vehicle manufacturers could benefit.

FULL STORY: CLICK HERE

‘We lost our way’ – next page
Poor quality cost Holden its Middle East business, says company executive

By IAN PORTER

QUALITY and service problems played a large role in undermining what had been a successful GM Holden push into Middle Eastern markets, according to one of the company’s senior purchasing executives.

The admission came during a frank exchange between parts suppliers and three senior purchasing officers from the local vehicle producers at last week’s AutoCRC national conference.

While optimistic about the industry’s future beyond 2015, all three urged parts suppliers to redouble their efforts to stay competitive and come up with products that can help set Australian cars apart from their rivals.

“We had the Middle East business, anchored in Melbourne, and we lost that; we lost it because of poor quality,” said GM Holden’s Michael Filazzola.

“It was also in the way we way we actually executed the program. That gave us a bit of a realisation that the rest of the world has passed us by.”

He said GMH executives thought they were doing a good job when they were not.

“We stood still, we thought we actually were doing a good job, but we really weren’t,” Mr Filazzola said. “It was nothing complicated. It was simple focus. We lost our way. We assumed things would happen, as opposed to executing and doing the follow-up.”

Toyota stressed the importance of exports to its Australian operations, with purchasing officer Barry Budge saying the company still maintained a staff of Australians in the Middle East to service that business.

“We have been exporting for quite some time and we have a very strong focus on our Middle East customers,” said Mr Budge. “We need to take their tastes and requirements into account. That’s why we have so many people over there trying to capture that information and data first-hand.

“But we cannot lose sight of the domestic market. If we don’t have a domestic market, we won’t have an export market, and that means we won’t have manufacturing. The domestic market is extra-important.”

Ford Australia’s Carl Parkin said the Blue Oval was considering what platform to manufacture after 2015 and suggested the company may get back into export during the next model cycle.

“If we produce an alternative vehicle to the Falcon and Territory here in Australia, it has to be exportable,” he said. “We are quite restricted at the moment in that we can only produce right-hand-drive vehicles. That’s been a help to us in some ways but has also been a challenge in terms of finding alternative markets for the vehicles.

“In terms of the future, it will definitely be a global platform and a vehicle we can export.”

When asked about the imbalance caused by the strong dollar and Australia’s tariffs – the lowest of any car-making country in the world – Toyota’s Mr Budge said nothing was going to change there. But he said Australia, and the industry, should fight harder to gain access to regional markets.

“Tere are a few countries in the region where the barriers are still there. They’ve got to come down and they have got to come down quickly,” he said. “If they don’t, we’re not going to be able to export into the region. If we don’t do that in the next five years none of us will be here.”
By IAN PORTER

LEADING Australian automotive component supplier Futuris has come up with a radical car seat that replaces heavy steel frames with a hollow plastic seatback made from strong synthetic fibres.

The new seat promises to infiltrate a large proportion of the seat market, particularly at the small-car end of the market, with the potential to rack up large sales in emerging markets like China and India.

And, in a major boost for the local parts industry, the new seatback can be made in Australia and exported around the world and still undercut traditional seat designs.

The new Futuris seat has emerged at a time when all car-makers are feverishly working to pare weight out of their designs in a bid to cut fuel consumption and, therefore, reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

Emissions and therefore weight reduction are now right up there with cost and styling as far as vehicle development priorities are concerned and car-makers are spending heavily on lightweight materials like aluminium and carbon-fibre.

Futuris has teamed up with the Cooperative Research Centre for Advanced Automotive Technology (AutoCRC) to develop the radical new approach to stripping weight out of its car seats. Other participants in the research were the CSIRO, Deakin University, UniSA and Melbourne’s RMIT.

Speaking at a lightweighting seminar held by the Society of Plastics Engineers as part of Victoria’s Automotive Week, AutoCRC research manager Gary White said the patented seat design could save as much as 10kg a car.

“Seating manufacturers around the world have been hitting a wall because the seat frame itself is generally made of steel, with a few cast components, perhaps,” he said.

“With steel components, there is only so much you can do in reducing the amount of steel in the seat, simplifying manufacturing processes – spot welding is one way – and getting cost out before you start losing functions like lumbar support and active head restraints.”

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Deakin Uni team wins top award, signs major deal

By TERRY MARTIN

AN ENGINE waste heat recovery system that can reduce fuel consumption by more than seven per cent – and which is now being developed by a car manufacturer for a new generation of powertrains – has won the gold award at the 2011 Society of Automotive Engineers - Australasia (SAE-A) Automotive Engineering Excellence Awards.

Known as ‘Over7’, the system redirects exhaust heat to rapidly bring engine oil up to its optimal operating temperature, thereby reducing warm-up times, fuel consumption and emissions.

Engine wear is also claimed to be reduced by up to 96 per cent.

Developed by a team of researchers at Deakin University led by senior lecturer Frank Will, the system has been adopted by a still-to-be-named car manufacturer for a new-generation engine series, and is being reviewed by other leading global vehicle manufacturers.

Two patent applications have been filed for ‘Over7’, which requires only small modifications to the engine lubrication system – basic piping, a valve and a new heat exchanger – and is claimed to be able to pay back the investment in less than a month if installed in the factory.

It can also potentially be sold as an aftermarket kit and is suitable for retrofits.

Mr Will told GoAuto this week that he had signed a confidentiality agreement with the car-maker in question, but said “we are in the process to determine the best value-for-money configuration for their engine (and) that can vary a bit from engine to engine”.

He said the same applies for aftermarket conversions and that he was looking for a partner to develop and sell such a kit after a previous deal “with a well-known Australian company” fell through.

As well as reducing fuel consumption by more than seven per cent, tests by the researchers show that emissions can fall by up to 30 per cent.

They claim that if Over7 is implemented in one per cent of the Australian passenger car fleet, 15 million litres of fuel and more than 36,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions will be saved each year.

The system, which heats only the ‘active’ oil in the engine lubrication system rather than all the oil in the sump, is also designed to be compatible with advanced technologies in areas such as hybrid, hi-tech diesels, bio-fuels and downsized turbocharged direct-injection engines.

Mr Will was presented with the gold award by Victorian manufacturing, exports and trade minister Richard Dalla-Riva.

GoAuto understands that further Over7 details will be revealed at the 2nd International Clean Vehicle Conference at Deakin University (Waurn Ponds campus) on September 20.

The silver award went to SMR Automotive Australia and the University of South Australia for its market-ready lightweight plastic rearvision mirror – a program which, as GoAuto has reported, recently received $2.4 million from the federal government’s now-defunct Green Car Innovation Fund.

A branch of multinational manufacturer Samvardhana Motherson Reflection Group, SMR Automotive Australia hopes to capture eight per cent of the global market with the new mirror, which it says will cut car fuel consumption and significantly reduce CO2 emissions.

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How an Aussie engineer helped VW take the lead in dual-clutch gearboxes

By IAN PORTER

THE dual-clutch transmission popularised by the Volkswagen Group – seen as a small miracle when it appeared – may not have seen the light of day had it not been for Australian engineer Ric Tamba.

Delivering lightning gearchanges, more driver control and better fuel economy, the DCT was hailed as another masterpiece of German engineering and cited as one of the reasons why the VW Group continued to thrive as others struggled in the face of waves of cheap Asian competition.

In fact, it was only with the assistance of Mr Tamba, who cut his teeth at the Borg-Warner plant in Albury in the 1980s before joining US engineering group Ricardo as a global transmission troubleshooter, that the dual-clutch phenomenon got off the ground.

Now free of legal prohibitions on talking about his role in the VW project, Mr Tamba last week detailed his experience at a technical conference promoted by the Cooperative Research Centre for Advanced Automotive Technology as part of Victoria’s Automotive Week.

“One night I was in a bar with a friend, an electronics engineer also from Australia and also contracted to Ricardo, and we asked ourselves why were we doing it for someone else? Why don’t we do it for ourselves?”

They started Nautitech, which also did marine and industrial/mining work, and worked for several international car-makers designing and prototyping transmissions and seeing them into production.

In 1998, Mr Tamba got a call from the vice-president of engineering at Borg-Warner in the US, Erich Wilfinger – the man who had hired him in Albury.

Mr Wilfinger had Volkswagen on the line wanting some help with its pioneering dual-clutch transmission technology.

DCT had been around with Porsche in racercars since the 1960s, but a racercar only launches once or maybe a few times from pitstops, and smoothness was not required. VW needed the system to handle multiple launches smoothly.

“We found clutch technology was available, we found pump and hydraulic technology was available, but controls were not there. We had no software controls, we had no electro-hydraulic actuators available, so I had to design a new electro-hydraulic solenoid for the clutch.

“We raised a patent on it, which these days is owned by Borg-Warner, and that is basically the same technology used on most DCTs today.”

VW was happy with the result and is now making around one million DCTs a year.

And Borg-Warner quickly signed Nautitech to an exclusive contract that lasted for seven years – preventing the company from designing a DCT for anyone else.

“They paid us a lot of money every year not to work for anyone else,” said Mr Tamba.

“All up, we did 12 DCTs for car-makers, of which the more famous are the VW units, the Nissan GT-R and the Bugatti Veyron.

“Ricardo of the UK and US get a lot of credit for the Veyron and they deserve it. They did a lot of the transmission design.

“However, what they don’t tell you is that the clutch and the valve body was actually designed in Australia by Nautitech.”

Nautitech designed DCTs and automatic transmissions for a wide range of car-makers, including Ferrari, Hyundai, VW, GM, Ford/Getrag, Nissan, Great Wall, Chery, Geely, ZF/BMW and Jatco, Japan’s largest transmission-maker.

The Borg-Warner retainer agreement ended in 2005, but there was a five-year ‘non-compete’ clause attached, which banned Mr Tamba from advertising his team’s role in developing DCTs.

However, because he had insisted that his name and those of his team be included as inventors on the 50-plus patents that had been granted, word soon spread and car-makers beat a path to the door of his new company, NTC Powertrain.

Mr Tamba told the conference in Melbourne that his team spent a lot of time with VW trying to develop this DCT technology – known as ‘DSG’ in VW-speak – and scoured the world for the right technology, but came up short.

“We found clutch technology was available, we found pump and hydraulic technology was available, but controls were not there. We had no software controls, we had no electro-hydraulic actuators available, so I had to design a new electro-hydraulic solenoid for the clutch.

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No range anxiety among Euro EV drivers as trials bring new issues to light

By RON HAMMERTON

REAL-WORLD electric vehicle (EV) trials in Germany and Britain are turning many assumptions on their heads, Britain’s leading authority on low-carbon transport, Professor Julia King, revealed in Melbourne last week.

Prof King, who led the British government’s landmark research into the transition to green motoring at the request of then chancellor of the exchequer Gordon Brown, said a Berlin pilot program involving 50 electric Mini E cars showed the drivers went further each day on average than those driving similar cars with conventional engines, despite the preconception of “EV range anxiety”.

The studies also found that EV drivers tended to shun public recharging points, preferring to recharge the batteries at home or work, challenging the belief that large sums need to be spent on public infrastructure to handle EVs, especially where most people live in homes with off-street parking.

And while the drivers in the trials initially started charging their cars every day to make sure the batteries were topped-up, after the first month they were more relaxed about it, only charging the car every few days and letting their batteries run to low levels without fretting about it.

Prof King, vice-chancellor of Aston University in Birmingham, was speaking in Melbourne at a forum for the Electric Vehicle Alliance, a fledgling new peak body for Australian stakeholders in the EV industry formed to address issues concerning the introduction of EVs in Australia.

A former aeronautical engineer for Rolls-Royce Aerospace, Prof King was the lead author of the King Review of Low Carbon Cars – the report on which the UK government has based its strategy for addressing greenhouse gas emissions from transport to help the nation achieve a 90 per cent cut in carbon emissions by 2050 compared with 1990.

She told the Melbourne forum – held in conjunction with the Australian International Motor Show – that the only way the UK could achieve its transport greenhouse targets was by switching to EVs run on low-carbon electricity.

She said the world motor vehicle fleet – currently about one billion cars and trucks – would at least double by 2030 and probably triple by 2050, not just due to demand from new-middle-class and wealthy masses in China and India but continuing growth in Europe and elsewhere.

That growth meant that the reduction of CO2 emissions per vehicle would have to be far greater per car to reverse the global upward CO2 trend.

Prof King said behavioural changes – a switch to best-practice cars, a focus on ‘eco driving’ and lower speed limits – could cut vehicle emissions by up to 50 per cent, although the UK climate change committee was working on an assumption of a 20 per cent reduction.

She said the UK’s current average CO2 emissions per car was 170 grams per kilometre, and for new cars it was 144g/km (Australia’s is 212.6g/km).

Even with best-scenario cuts delivered by behavioural changes and gains in conventional engine technology, vehicles would fall well short of CO2 targets required for greenhouse mitigation.

“About 70-80g/km is considered the best we will ever get from an internal combustion engine – that’s about where the technology runs out,” she said. “But we need a 90 per cent reduction in per kilometre emissions, so we need to take 144g/km down to 14g/km by 2050.

“Electric vehicles with a de-carbonised electricity system are about the only technology we can see today that is going to deliver that kind of scale of change.”

Prof King said based on the current carbon emissions of UK electricity generation, current EVs had a slightly better ‘emissions’ than the best internal-combustion engine cars such as the Toyota Prius.

But she said Britain planned to reduce CO2 emissions from electricity generation over the next several decades, which would cut the EV footprint.

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GoAuto News

i-MiEV multiplies

Latest Mitsu EV tech set for Australia as two new i-MiEVs launch in Japan

By MARTON PETTENDY

TWO new versions of Mitsubishi’s i-MiEV have been released in Japan – including a cheaper entry-level version with a shorter driving range – a month before the pioneering electric vehicle becomes available to the Australian public for $48,800 plus on-road costs.

Mitsubishi said both new i-MiEV variants are a direct result of the falling cost of lithium-ion batteries and that, while neither will be launched in Australia, some of their advanced technologies could soon become available here.

Now opening Mitsubishi’s expanded EV model range in Japan is the i-MiEV M, which is fitted with a smaller (10.5kW/hour) and lower-voltage (270-volt) battery pack that together with a less powerful 30kW motor delivers a claimed 120km of zero-emissions driving.

In Japan, the 1070kg i-MiEV M, which produces the same 180Nm of peak torque but only to 1000rpm (rather than 2000rpm in the original i-MiEV), costs ¥2.6 million ($A30,100) before government incentives.

Meanwhile, Mitsubishi’s new i-MiEV G flagship weighs 1110kg and incorporates the same 16kWh/330V battery and 47kW/180Nm motor as the standard i-MiEV, but adds an upgraded regenerative braking system that extends the regular model’s theoretical driving range from 160km (155km according to a new Australian Design Rule test) to 180km.

Also designed to broaden the model’s appeal in Japan, the i-MiEV G – which adds LED headlights and tail-lights, 15-inch alloy wheels, a leather-clad steering wheel and gearshifter, satellite-navigation and heated front seats – costs ¥3.8 million ($A44,000) before incentives in Japan.

The i-MiEV M battery can be quick-charged to 80 per cent capacity in just 15 minutes or fully charged in 4.5 hours via a 200V/15amp outlet (or in 14 hours via a 100V/10amp system), while the i-MiEV G battery can be quick-charged in 30 minutes or fully charged in seven hours (200V/15amp) or 21 hours (100V/10amp).

While the i-MiEV G’s higher-capacity lithium-ion battery will continue to be produced by Mitsubishi’s joint-venture with GS Yuasa, the M model’s lower-output unit will be supplied by Toshiba.

Mitsubishi says the cost of Li-Ion batteries – the most expensive single component in most EVs – has more than halved in the past two years. “Costs have really come down dramatically,” said MMC president Osamu Masuko last week. “We will try to keep the price down even when the subsidies go away.”

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FULL STORY: CLICK HERE

SUN SHINES ON i-MiEV: CLICK HERE

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VW expects big things from its leaner, smarter, value-laden Touareg II luxury SUV

By HAITHAM RAZAGUI
SHORT of providing a numerical sales forecast, Volkswagen’s Australian outpost expects to sell “heaps” of its second-generation Touareg in this country’s booming SUV market.

Speaking at the Australian launch of the redesigned Touareg last weekend, VW Group Australia general manager of press and PR Karl Gehling told GoAuto that the company is “very happy with the product, the specification, the pricing and positioning”.

Mr Gehling added that, since the vehicle was unveiled at the 2010 Geneva motor show, there had been encouraging levels of customer enquiry and that around 200 vehicles are already on the ground in Australia to satisfy initial orders.

The first-generation Touareg averaged 55 units per month, topping 100 monthly sales 11 times since its launch in January 2003, with a peak of 161 sales in June 2009.

With the introduction of a V6 diesel-powered, leather-upholstered $62,990 entry-level 150TDI variant, the bigger, more luxurious, but lighter and more economical new Touareg range opens $13,000 less expensive than its predecessor’s single runout spec and $2000 cheaper than the original five-cylinder, cloth-seated base model.

Mr Gehling said the keen pricing is due to the new Touareg being cheaper to manufacture than before, and that the strong Aussie dollar is also a contributor, “as it has with all of our new models”.

Volkswagen is pushing the Touareg’s luxury status hard with a multi-media ‘Fall in luxury’ advertising campaign that started over the weekend, coinciding with the car’s official press launch in Noosa.

With prices starting from $62,990 (plus on-road costs) and therefore firmly in luxury SUV territory, the question remains as to whether customers will be put off by the Touareg’s relative lack of badge prestige.

“If people are put off by a badge, there is very little we can do to persuade them otherwise,” said Mr Gehling. “Their mind is already made up.”

At 4795mm long, the Touareg is 62mm shorter than BMW’s X5 (from $92,100) but priced similarly to the Audi Q5 and BMW X3, which are respectively 166mm and 145mm shorter than the VW and therefore less roomy.

The Touareg’s most direct competitor on size, price and possibly brand prestige is the ageing Volvo XC90 – which has been on sale in Australia almost as long as the Touareg and averaging 116 units per month.

The XC90 offers the benefit of seven-seat practicality, a feature VW says it omitted due to the vehicle’s dimensions.

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**Touch of class**

Continued from previous page

Despite the previous Touareg’s slower than expected sales being attributed by some to its lack of third-row seating, Volkswagen Group Australia marketing manager Jutta Friese denied the brand is planning a stretched, seven-seat Touareg.

The big VW trumps most other luxury SUVs with all variants offering a 3500kg braked towing capacity.

The second-generation Touareg is available from launch with VW Group’s 3.0-litre turbo-diesel V6 in 150kW (150TDI) or 176kW (V6 TDI) tune plus a V6 FSI 3.6-litre 206kW naturally aspirated petrol V6.

Both V6 TDI and V6 FSI models are priced from $77,990.

All get a few of Volkswagen’s eco-friendly BlueMotion technologies (but not the full BlueMotion treatment) such as idleshop, brake energy recuperation and thermal management for the drivetrain to ensure quicker warm-up times.

No other variants – including the petrol-electric hybrid or 4.2-litre V8 diesel offered elsewhere – are planned at this stage.

A minor model-year changeover took place while existing Touareg stocks were being shipped, meaning that some early adopters will get a fraction less power and fuel economy.

MY2012 150kW diesels become 10kg lighter and more efficient (down from 7.6 to 7.2 litres per 100km) while the 176kW diesel loses 5kg and has power upped to 180kW, with consumption improving to 7.4L/100km (down 0.2).

The 150kW/440Nm diesel sprints to 100km/h in 9.0 seconds, while both the 180kW/550Nm diesel and 206kW/360Nm petrol complete the dash in 7.8 seconds.

The 150TDI emits 190 grams per kilometre of CO2, the V6 TDI emits 196g/km and the V6 FSI pumps out 240g/km while consuming 10.1L/100km on average.

Mr Gehling said VW expects the 180kW diesel variant to be the volume seller, particularly among early adopters, who typically opt for a high specification. Mid-to long-term, he sees diesels accounting for more than 90 per cent of Touareg sales.

A generously equipped single specification level is standard across the higher-powered diesel and petrol variants, with a slightly lower level of equipment – and fewer available options – exclusively paired with the entry-level 150kW engine.

In addition to a full complement of electronic safety aids, including a rollover sensor system, all Touareg variants come with nine airbags, comprising outer rear-seat passenger side protectors, front, side, and curtain airbags plus a driver’s knee-bag.

**PRICING:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engine Type</th>
<th>Power/KW</th>
<th>Fuel Economy/L/100km</th>
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<tr>
<td>3.0 150TDI (a)</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 V6 TDI diesel (a)</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 V6 FSI petrol (a)</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 V6 TDI 4XMotion (a)</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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</tbody>
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**McKenzie appointed Northern Manager**

**AUTOMOTIVE PERSONNEL** International are pleased to welcome Geoff McKenzie to the team, as both Regional Manager – QLD/NT and National Manager Financial Services Recruitment.

Geoff McKenzie has forged an impressive career in the automotive industry and brings to the role a level of knowledge and experience that will surely benefit both clients and candidates alike.

Starting out in vehicle finance with Custom Credit and later HFC Financial Services and Ford Credit, Geoff quickly developed his skills which saw him appointed to senior roles of National Finance and Insurance Sales Manager and later National Account Manager at Ford Leasing – capping off an 18 year history with Ford Credit.

Geoff then moved from vehicle finance to partner in a Ford dealership in Caboolture, Queensland. As owner operator of a re-named and re-homed franchise, Geoff and his business partner set new records for the Ford brand in their PMA.

With the support of Automotive Personnel International’s head office in Sydney, Geoff will be working to grow and establish our client base in Queensland and the Northern Territory. With his home on the Sunshine Coast, and love of the Sunshine State, Geoff believes he can positively contribute to the automotive industry up north.

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- Provide business management leadership to BMW Group Australia and BMW Group New Zealand colleagues.
- Evaluate the financial position of BMW Group franchise candidates and make appropriate recommendations.
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- Facilitate the transfer of data to BMW AG for input to the KPI Cockpit.

The successful candidate will have a tertiary degree in Business Studies with a major in Accounting. Post-graduate training in strategic planning is also an advantage. Previous experience in the retail/wholesale environment of the automotive industry is essential, as is dealing with small business enterprise.

The role requires people management, influencing and communication skills (both written and verbal), analytical ability, creative problem solving, and logical thinking.

Applications online are invited by 20 July to https://www.onetest.com.au/bmw/ap36672/
**Jetta variants gain ADR tick as VW model rollout and record sales continue**

By HAITHAM RAZAGUI

**VOLKSWAGEN’S** volume-boosting new model assault is far from over, with the new Golf Cabrio, facelifted Tiguan crossover, Golf GTI Edition 35 anniversary special and redesigned Jetta sedan all set to arrive in Australia by the end of this year.

Providing clues as to what Australian buyers can expect to see in coming months, the enlarged Jetta, which Volkswagen has distanced from its Golf sibling and claims to be “more comfortable, sustainable and dynamic” than its predecessor, has completed Australian Design Rule (ADR) certification.

The sedan has been approved with three variants including 103kW 2.0-litre diesel and 118kW 1.4-litre petrol engines familiar to Golf buyers.

A third engine, a 147kW 2.0-litre turbo-petrol from the previous-generation Golf GTI will serve as the flagship but the base 77kW 1.6-litre diesel and eco-friendly BlueMotion variants are apparently omitted.

The 173kW Golf GTI Edition 35 has also completed ADR certification in three- and five-door body styles.

Volkswagen Group Australia has sold almost 15,000 Jettas since the beginning of 2006, an average of 222 per month, and managing director Anke Koeckler told GoAuto in April that the new Jetta would form a sales pillar alongside the top-selling Golf and Tiguan.

The Mexican-built Jetta is similarly priced model-for-model with the Golf hatch in the UK market, but VGA may elect to pitch it slightly upmarket Down Under, explaining the lack of a base model. The outgoing model was priced similarly to the Golf wagon.

Being 70mm shorter than the mid-sized Toyota Camry and 140mm longer than Holden’s Cruze small-segment sedan, the Jetta – which VW promises will offer plenty of space and comfort – will bridge the gap between Golf and Passat at the small end of the medium-car market, enabling VGA to compete on price with volume sellers like the aforementioned Camry.

Australian Volkswagen sales are up 6.2 per cent for the first half 2011, setting the scene for another sales high-water point after last year smashing its 1964 record of 31,419 sales by almost 6600 units.

The local new-vehicle market is down 6.6 per cent year-to-date, enabling the Wolfsburg-based brand to grow its market share from 3.6 per cent 12 months ago to 4.1 per cent and climb past Honda and Subaru in the Australian sales charts to eighth.

The brand achieved a similar market share percentage growth for the 2010 calendar year, from 3.2 to 3.7 per cent, with sales rising 26.4 per cent.

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**WAITING FOR BEETLE**

**VOLKSWAGEN** has released more details of its next Beetle two months before it goes on sale in North America in September, but Australians will have to wait at least a further 12 months for the redesigned German automotive icon.

The first all-new Beetle since 1998 made simultaneous global debuts in Shanghai, New York and Berlin on April 18, when VW said it would go on sale in Australia some time in 2012. Now, however, Volkswagen has confirmed to GoAuto that Australia will be among the last markets in the world to gain access to the more muscular new Beetle hatchback, which will not arrive here until late next year.

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Benz’s new B

Mercedes announces full details of next-gen B-class

By MARTON PETTENDY

MERCEDES-BENZ has fired off its next-generation B-class salvo almost a year ahead of Australian sales in the second quarter of 2012.

More than 30 technical images and full details — including new petrol and diesel engines, a new dual-clutch transmission and class-leading aerodynamics — of the all-new B-segment hatchback have been released two months before it debuts at the Frankfurt motor show in September.

However, Benz is keeping at least some of its powder dry until then by revealing only partial interior and exterior images, including a backlit side profile shot that confirms the second-generation B-class will shed its tallboy stance in favour of a sleeker, low-slung design not unlike the M-class wagon, the third generation of which will be released by mid-2012.

On sale in Europe from November, the MkII B-class replaces the five-door first launched in Australia in November 2005 and will be joined here by the end of next year by a redesigned MkIII A-class, as previewed by the striking A-class concept at the Shanghai show in April.

In the absence of the smallest Mercedes model, Australian sales of the original B-class have bounced by almost 40 per cent to more than 1200 sales in the first half of this year, aided by a special-edition Anniversary Package from last month.

That is on top of a near-185 per cent sales surge last year to 1950 sales, following a range-wide repositioning and the discontinuation of the slow-selling A-class in January 2010, putting the B-class ahead of its most direct compact premium rivals in the BMW 1 Series, Audi A3 and this year’s new Lexus CT200h.

But that has not stopped the German giant developing a replacement that Mercedes claims brings more advances than any other model in its long and illustrious history.

“No model change in the history of Mercedes-Benz has ever seen so many new developments introduced in one fell swoop,” said Mercedes-Benz Cars board member for group research and head of development, Dr Thomas Weber.

“Future B-class customers will benefit from this quantum leap in terms of exemplary low fuel consumption and CO2 emissions combined with driving pleasure, plenty of space and the customary high standard of safety from Mercedes-Benz.”

Bigger in all directions except height, the 2012 B-class is about 90mm longer at 4359mm and about 10mm wider at 1786mm, but comes with a 1557mm roof height — almost 50mm lower than before.

In response to customer demand and thanks to seats that are 86mm closer to the road, however, Mercedes says all five seating positions are more upright, while increased front headroom of 1013mm is said to make the B-class one of the most spacious in its class.

Pug 508 RXH hybrid on agenda for Australia

By MARTON PETTENDY

PEUGEOT has revealed a jacked-up, diesel-electric crossover version of the all-new 508 wagon that goes on sale later this week.

Confirmed to make its global debut at the Frankfurt motor show in September before going on sale in Europe next April, the 508 RXH is also under consideration for release in Australia, where it would effectively replace the discontinued 607 as the French brand’s flagship.

“The 508 RXH is definitely of interest to us for Australia but this early in the piece we have no firm idea of timing,” confirmed Peugeot Automobiles Australia’s Kirin Tipping.

“Naturally we also need to investigate thoroughly the business case for bringing the car here, and right now our immediate focus is on launching the 508 sedan and wagon in non-hybrid formats.

“But the car is a very exciting prospect and represents a major leap forward in what hybrid technology can achieve, and so in essence it’s of great interest.”

Unlike the 508 sedan and wagon range — which replaces the 407 line-up and will initially be available with 115kW 1.6-litre turbo-petrol, 120kW 2.0-litre turbo-diesel and 150kW 2.2-litre turbo-diesel engines, priced from $36,990 plus ORCs — the 508 RXH will be a dedicated hybrid model.

It is powered by the same diesel-electric drivetrain as seen in the 3008 Hybrid4, which is now being launched overseas and should join petrol and diesel versions of the high-riding 3008 wagon here by mid-2012.
Saab announces trio of new models in pipeline

By MARTON PETTENDY

SAAB has announced a landmark deal with a Chinese investor to produce not one but three all-new models.

Details and timing remain sketchy, but a new global entry-level model dubbed the 9-1 is likely to emerge first, followed by larger 9-6X crossover and 9-7 sedan models aimed directly at the US and Chinese markets.

The 9-6 and 9-7 are expected to be based on Saab’s all-new Phoenix modular platform, which Saab sources say can be stretched to an overall length of 5.4 metres, but it is not yet clear what will underpin the 9-1.

Saab had previously said an all-new small car, previously referred to as the 92, would be based on a platform supplied by another manufacturer – possibly BMW, which was also expected to provide the car’s four-cylinder petrol engine.

Saab sources previously told GoAuto the Swedish brand’s all-new small car would be too compact to be based on the Phoenix platform. However, recent European reports suggest the 9-1 will also be Phoenix-based with an overall length of about 4.2 metres.

That would make the sub-9-3 model a completely Scandinavian model, potentially, a direct rival for BMW’s upcoming front-drive hatchback, which could be called the 0 Series by the time it slots in between the i3 city-EV and the redesigned 1 Series.

FULL STORY: CLICK HERE

Feeding Frendzy

By MIKE COSTELLO

RENAULT has signalled its light commercial future with the radical Frendzy concept, which has been unveiled well ahead of its debut at September’s Frankfurt motor show.

The concept is said to represent the ‘world of work’ stage of Renault’s lifecycle-inspired design strategy, which began with the scissor-doored DeZir coupe concept at last year’s Paris motor show.

The curvaceous DeZir represented the idea of ‘love at first sight’, while the Captur crossover and R-Space MPV concepts from the most recent Geneva show were inspired by the ‘discovering the world’ and ‘establishment of a family’ stages of life respectively.

Sharing a similar nose treatment and wave-like body contours with those concept models, the Frendzy is equally striking, with voluptuous curves and a sparse, hi-tech interior.

Renault – which is Europe’s biggest seller of LCVs – says the Frendzy is intended to be a commercial business vehicle that doubles up as a passenger vehicle when required.

“Frendzy is the must-have vehicle for flexibility and versatility. It is efficient and modern as a work tool, yet sporting and warmly welcoming for the family,” said Renault’s advanced design director Axel Braun.

The exterior of the concept has an unusual layout: the driver’s side features two pillarless, centre-opening doors, while the passenger side’s conventional front door is joined by a commercial van-style sliding side-door.

The car’s exterior designer, Deyan Denkov, said this strangely configured, snub-nosed design was partly inspired by unconventionally shaped aircraft like the Airbus Beluga and Antonov 224.

“The concept of an asymmetric body design was the most logical way to express this vehicle’s two roles,” he said. “From the very start, I wanted to move away from the traditional format for commercial vehicles and, in doing so, show that this type of vehicle could also be more emotional, more dynamic and more attractive.”

FULL STORY: CLICK HERE
GoAuto News

Subaru in ‘Motion-V’

Five-year business plan details new models, 50K sales target Down Under

By MARTON PETTENDY

SUBARU has committed to releasing three additional models and its first hybrid vehicle within the next five years, as part of an ambitious mid-term business plan that targets 900,000 annual global sales – including 50,000 in Australia – by March 2016.

It is not yet clear which of the four all-new models will be sold here but the first to appear should be the ‘Subarota’, the rear-drive boxer-powered coupe that was co-developed with Toyota and will be launched in Japan in the second quarter of 2012.

The landmark Subaru sportscar’s Australian future will not be known until October but almost certain to be sold here next year is the production version of the Impreza-based XV crossover concept that is yet to be officially confirmed for showrooms but is likely to be the second of Subaru’s four “all-new” models.

Also based on the fourth-generation Impreza small car, which made its Australian debut alongside the XV concept at this month’s Melbourne motor show but might not be seen here until mid-2012, are replacements for the existing WRX and STi.

Like the XV, the next-generation WRX and STi models are set to wear a unique bodyshell and will be released as standalone models separate to the Mk4 Impreza sedan and hatch range, but could be up to two years away.

Rounding out the four additional models will be Subaru’s first hybrid model – likely to be based on the Hybrid Tourer concept that debuted at the 2009 Tokyo motor show – which has now been confirmed for launch in Japan in 2013.

Similar in concept to Toyota’s upcoming Prius V people-mover, the Hybrid Tourer show car featured a unique hybrid system employing two electric motors – one at either end of the vehicle – plus regenerative braking and idle-stop systems and a lithium-ion battery pack similar to that found in Subaru’s plug-in Stella EV concept.

At the time, Subaru said its direct-injection boxer four-cylinder engine was the hybrid wagon’s primary power source during normal driving, with the 20kW rear electric motor assisting the petrol engine during acceleration and the 10kW front motor also kicking in during uphill acceleration.

The Hybrid Tourer employed a full parallel, or two-mode, hybrid drive system like Toyota’s expanding Prius family, but with a rear electric motor providing drive for take-off and low speeds, such as parking.

Subaru’s first hybrid vehicle will play an important role in achieving its lofty new target to reduce the fuel consumption of its new model fleet by 30 per cent between now and March 2016.

As part of the five-year growth strategy – dubbed ‘Motion-V’ – it announced last week, Subaru said it plans to reduce the development costs of new vehicles by 20 per cent.

It has also vowed to “become the world’s leading brand in safety performance by providing all-around safety that comprises risk-avoidance technologies (active safety), systems in collision safety (passive safety), and pre-crash safety features”.

The latter will include EyeSight, the stereo camera-based pre-crash safety system that will make its Australian debut next year in the Liberty.

As part of its mid-term management plan, Subaru forecast a 3.6 per cent sales decline to 633,000 units and a 64.3 per cent slump in operating income to ¥30 billion ($A3.4b) for its current financial year ending March 31, 2012, following Japan’s devastating March 11 earthquake.

FULL STORY: CLICK HERE

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Government of South Australia

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**GoAuto News**

**Confident on Picanto**

Green light for Kia mini ‘just a matter of time’ as Australia tackles supply

By TERRY MARTIN

**KIA** Motors Australia is confident it will secure the new-generation Picanto micro-car for sale in Australia in 2012.

Vehicle supply appears to be the only sticking point for the Australian subsidiary, which is still in negotiations with its South Korean parent for production allocations across its entire range for next year – a decision on which will be finalised in the final quarter.

Kia Motors Australia chief operating officer Tony Barlow has told GoAuto that he believes it was “just a matter of time” before the green light is given for the all-new Picanto, which was first unveiled in Geneva in March and is now on sale in Europe and the UK.

“We’re still working on it, still talking with Korea. There’s no decision on it but we’re very hopeful of getting it on the product line-up,” he said.

“I personally think it’s just a matter of time, getting the production, of course. Once again, it’s a very popular model around the world, so we put our hand up for it last year – and that’s really late in the cycle to get it from this model launch – so we’re battling, we speak about it every week, we’ve done numerous submissions and I think the need is very clear in Korea.”

Mr Barlow said that there was no sticking point with the factory over price points for the new Picanto, which would be positioned below the forthcoming circa-$15,500 three-door version of the new-generation Rio light car due on sale here early next year, following the five-door’s launch next month.

Pricing for the new Rio is still to be announced.

While he admitted that the company was looking “very closely” at the influx of cheaper Chinese-built light cars on to the Australian market, Mr Barlow said the Kia brand was now in a different league and that Picanto – as with the new Rio – would not be measured on price alone.

“We’ve moved away from just determining the vehicle entry points by price,” he said.

“It’s more about the brand and where the brand is going to go.

“We are looking at our position in the market overall, and the determining factor (for Picanto) will not be on price – it will be whether we can get the model volume to be able to accommodate the market properly.”

Mr Barlow said Kia Australia had to factor in significant launch costs and other expenses against vehicle allocations.

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**Kia-backed Motorvation bolsters student driver training with hi-tech simulators**

By MIKE COSTELLO

KIA Australia has announced it will expand its existing support for Motorvation, which has been providing driver training to Victorian school students through the Kia Young Drivers program for the past two years.

The expansion will see sophisticated driving simulators mounted on hydraulics fitted to two specially designed buses that will travel to schools throughout Victoria and New South Wales.

Motorvation recently took delivery of the advanced motion simulators, two of which will be fitted to each bus.

Each mobile training centre will cost around $500,000 with the two machines fitted, and Motorvation hopes to eventually have one bus up and running for each state.

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Big future for JLR

New Defender in works as Jaguar Land Rover strives to double sales under Tata

By HAITHAM RAZAGUI

JAGUAR Land Rover (JLR) is working to an ambitious five-year business plan that includes a complete model refresh for Land Rover, a small sportscar plus either a rear-drive sub-XF sedan or compact luxury SUV for Jaguar.

And despite the utilitarian and iconic Defender accounting for little more than 20,000 annual sales in JLR’s 174 global markets, the Tata Motors-owned company’s group sales operations director Phil Popham is pressing ahead with an all-new replacement.

Speaking at a pre-motor show media event in Melbourne recently, Mr Popham said a side-effect of the “very, very aggressive” business plan – which includes the development of a globalisation strategy to protect the company from international instability – was an expected doubling of sales volume by 2016.

“Doubling sales wasn’t the starting point; that just happens to be the outcome,” he said.

JLR is also thinking seriously about overseas production. Land Rover recently began producing the Freelander in Pune, India, and a Chinese plant is also under consideration.

Mr Popham said the company was talking with potential partners in China, adding that as JLR expands into developing markets it would have to look at growing its production capacity overseas – avoiding punitive import duties in some markets and benefiting from free trade agreements in others.

He said overseas facilities would be used satisfy local or regional demand and did not envisage vehicles built at those plants being exported back to Europe.

The Tata-backed £1.5 billion product development blitz, starting with the all-new Evoque crossover that will be launched in Australia in October, will renew the entire Land Rover line-up – including the iconic Defender – by 2016.

Mr Popham said Jaguar would build a sub-XF contender but that it was not yet decided if this would take the shape of a rear-wheel-drive BMW 3 Series competitor or compact luxury SUV.

Either way, he said the model was unlikely to see the light of day before the middle of this decade, adding that although these models would compete in a volume-selling sector, JLR’s desire was to remain a “premium niche manufacturer”.

The small Jaguar sportscar – positioned below the XK to compete with the likes of BMW’s Z4, Mercedes SLK and Porsche Boxster/Cayman – is due to arrive sooner, Mr Popham said. Early test mules have already been spotted in Europe.

Upgrade for Disco 4 and Range Rover Sport coming but tech tweaks are further afield

By HAITHAM RAZAGUI

LAND Rover’s Discovery 4 and Range Rover Sport will each gain extra equipment, mild exterior tweaks and new option packs from November as part of an MY2012 update.

However Australia misses out on the tweaked, more efficient 3.0-litre V6 turbo-diesel engine and ZF eight-speed automatic transmission that is now being rolled out on European-delivered models.

The Discovery remains powered by 2.7-litre and 3.0-litre V6 turbo-diesels plus a naturally aspirated 5.0-litre V8, while the Range Rover Sport gets the latter two engines plus a supercharged V8. All models retain the six-speed automatic transmission.

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By IAN PORTER

AUSTRAILIA’S own supercar, the Joss JP1, is back on track after almost disappearing from sight over the past seven years.

Matt Thomas, the man behind the Joss and the company’s driving force, has not only kept his dream alive but has enhanced the design, the components and, most importantly, the chances of the car actually making it into production.

Revealed in a blaze of premature glory at the 2004 Melbourne motor show, the Joss promptly went nowhere as promised financing repeatedly evaporated.

But Mr Thomas, an aerodynamicist with the defunct Stewart Formula One team, persisted and revealed a test mule at the 2011 Melbourne International Motor Show media day on July 1.

Mr Thomas and his band of mostly volunteer ex-F1 and Le Mans technicians have made significant progress with the supercar challenger. The car has been redesigned since 2004 to be more contemporary both inside and out.

The aim is to build a supercar that will cost the same – around $500,000 – as high-end sportscars from the established manufacturers.

“It will come out at the same price as the McLaren and the Ferrari 458, which has an aluminium chassis and an aluminium body in the Ferrari’s case,” said Mr Thomas. “This is a supercar for a high-end sportscar price.”

Mr Thomas was reluctant to talk about performance figures, but is on record saying the new Joss should accelerate to 100km/h in less than three seconds. But he is not planning to compete with the established marques on volume.

“We are aiming at 25 to 100 cars a year,” he said. “And it will be literally handcrafted, not pressed. Inevitably, those other cars have a lot of aluminium content, whereas this is mainly composite.”

The carbon-fibre, and the resultant power-to-weight ratio, is the key to the Joss. Mr Thomas sees weight reduction as one of the crucial aspects of the design, the edge that will give it the performance to stand out in a crowd.

He conceded there are a lot of 200mph supercars around but stressed that top speed is not what he is aiming at.

“To me, the fastest car in the world is the fastest car around the Nurburgring: cornering, braking, all your dynamics. That’s why our main target is weight reduction because that helps with high cornering Gs,” he said.

But Mr Thomas also wants the car to be suitable for interstate cruising.

“We are not building a racecar for the road. With our car, in my mind, you need to be able to put your partner in the car and go for a drive interstate or, in Europe, go to another country.

“The missus being in the car is going to be the greatest critic you are going to get, so it needs to meet all those standards.”

Nevertheless, he wants to race “a balls-to-the-wall version” of the car. He said he is frustrated that Australia and New Zealand are so well represented in European racing teams but that Australia does not have a car of its own to compete with the best.

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Hopes are high but full details still under wraps for Aussie-built supercar

FULL STORY: CLICK HERE

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Aston confirms V12 Zagato build, strong local interest

By MARTON PETTENDY

ASTON Martin has revealed the obvious conclusion to one of the most drawn-out model introductions in recent times: the V12 Zagato will enter production.

Just 150 examples will be produced at the British sportscar-maker’s Gaydon headquarters in Warwickshire and strong interest has been expressed in Australia, despite a £330,000 ($A489,000) starting price excluding local taxes.

Aston Martin’s Asia Pacific marketing and communications manager Marcel Fabris confirmed the V12 Zagato will be built in both right- and left-hand-drive configuration and certified for road registration in Australia.

“We have the V12 Zagato having been awarded top honours in the recent Concorso d’Eleganza’s design award for concept cars and prototypes on the shores of Lake Como, Italy, and its very strong performance proving the vehicle’s dynamic pedigree and reliability at last month’s Nurburgring 24-hour race, our dealers are receiving strong interest from enthusiasts looking to secure an example of this very limited and unique Aston Martin,” he told GoAuto.

So far no firm Australian orders have been placed for the V12 Vantage-based coupe, which was designed by Italian styling studio Zagato and should top the $506,091 DBS Volante as Aston’s most expensive model in Australia.

FULL STORY: CLICK HERE

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FULL STORY: CLICK HERE
Almost 200,000 visitors flock to Melbourne show

MARTON PETTENDY and HAITHAM RAZAGUI

MOTOR show goers have voted with their feet for a single annual automotive showcase alternating between the nation’s two largest capitals, with Melbourne’s inaugural Australian International Motor Show drawing almost 200,000 visitors.

Figures compiled since the 2011 AIMS closed its doors on Sunday night shows Melbourne’s first major motor show in two years attracted a total of 193,755 motoring fans.

Although that is less than the halcyon days of Melbourne’s 75-year-old motor show, it is 39 per cent up on last year’s AIMS in Sydney, which attracted just 139,000 visitors.

Despite being open for one less day, it also lured 34 per cent more people than the last Melbourne International Motor Show in 2009 (160,000).

Just as importantly, the first Victorian motor show since Melbourne and Sydney show organisers formed a joint venture to co-promote a single annual event also attracted strong retail sales, at least for a number of premium vehicle brands.

GoAuto understands Lamborghini sold at least two examples of its all-new $754,600 Aventador super-coupe at the Melbourne show, while Maserati also found two new customers for its GranTurismo MC Stradale ($364,900).

MOTOR Show drawing almost 200,000 visitors.

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NZ set for sales rebound

Fresh stocks to the rescue as Kiwi auto sector looks beyond June sales decline

By JACQUI MADELIN in NEW ZEALAND

THE New Zealand motor industry is confident post-Japan-earthquake stock shortages will turn around from this month, despite another sales drop in June.

June sales were down 4.4 per cent on the corresponding month last year, to 7652, but New Zealand sales remain in the black year-to-date with 42,012 vehicles sold for a 6.5 per cent rise on 2010.

In the first half of 2011, the passenger car market rose 3.3 per cent, to 31,291 vehicles, while commercial vehicles were up 19.3 per cent, to 10,944.

NZ Motor Industry Association CEO Perry Kerr said stock shortages were still affecting new passenger car sales. “I am, however, heartened by the number of vehicles crossing the wharf in June,” he said.

Used import vehicle sales have dropped 6.5 per cent year to date over the same period last year, with 41,688 registrations.

But MTA statistics show the number of vehicles changing hands overall in the year to June remains the same as 2010, with Christchurch transactions dropping one per cent.

Toyota holds its number one spot year to date with 8064 sales for 19.19 per cent – down 3.4 per cent on the same period last year after another bad month, with June sales down 39.8 per cent.

Toyota NZ chief executive Alistair Davis said he expected the greatest impact from May to July, possibly into August, and doubts Toyota’s industry lead is at risk over the full year “unless our supply chain takes a blow”.

“We’ve had two of the worst months we expect, and I think we’re at the bottom of the trough in terms of supply,” he said.

Toyota stock typically numbers 3300 units. “Last month we had literally a couple of thousand units of stock across the country, and brought in 800,” Mr Davis said. “At the start of July we’re down to just under 1800 units, and arrivals are up to 1330 – up 60 per cent.

“In June we had virtually no Yaris, no SUVs and very few Corolla,” he said, adding that supply was expected to return to normal within three months.

Ford sits second with 4346 sales, up 2.4 per cent, for 10.34 per cent share.

Holden sold 3757 vehicles – down 7.7 per cent – for 8.94 per cent share YTD. Holden NZ managing director Jeff Murray said he did not expect market growth to continue, and forecast a total 82,000 to 83,000 sales this year, up three per cent on 2010.

Honda working to ‘claw back’ sales in Australia

By TERRY MARTIN

BUOYED by more than 4100 new-vehicle sales in June – up from 2300 in May – Honda Australia senior director Lindsay Smalley is confident the Japanese brand can recover from its sales downturn, which is currently at 26.4 per cent year to date.

“It’ll be a tough year for us, without a doubt,” he said. “However, we had a huge lift in June – we popped up to 4162 (units) – and that involved nothing ‘artificial’, it wasn’t pushed, it’s an almost instant reaction to our price realignment.”

Honda recently slashed prices on a number of key models, including Jazz, CR-V, Odyssey and wide-bodied Accord, following a major realignment with its European-sourced Civic hatch, which now starts from $29,990.

Its MY12 Accord Euro now on sale has also taken a cut of $1150 across the range. Mr Smalley said he expected the company “to claw it back” sales-wise to a downturn of less than 20 per cent, but added that “there is going to be some limitations to stock” until August or September when supplies return to normal after production delays stemming from the March 11 earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

“That’ll start to certainly free up from September onwards. We’ll jump on the gas then,” he said.

According to Mr Smalley, Honda is working hard to return to annual sales of 50,000 to 60,000.

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Source: MIA NZ, July 2011
Car sector aims to resume normal transmission after Japan quake hits first half

By RON HAMMERTON

THE second half of 2011 is expected to paint a much more telling picture of the true state of Australian automotive sales than the first half.

Down 6.6 per cent on the first six months of last year, the year-to-date score line has been skewed by the devastating March 11 Japanese earthquake and tsunami that crippled vehicle production of cars and parts for the best part of three months.

The quake was a major contributor to market leader Toyota Australia’s 20.8 per cent plunge in volume, and rattled a few other cages as well. Even several Japanese car-makers who were ‘lucky’ to have large stocks sitting on grass in Australia when the quake hit in March experienced some shortfalls of their more popular models – shortages that persist into July.

Toyota’s deficit of 22,342 units over the first half of last year accounts for about two thirds of the 34,932 shortfall in the overall Australian market, which has slipped to 496,236 vehicles – just south of the one-million-unit running rate that most pundits expected this year.

It would be rash to attribute all of Toyota’s woes on the quake shortages that not only crippled its imports but forced a go-slow at its Australian Camry/Aurion plant in Melbourne.

A glance back to March VFACTS sales figures reveal Toyota was running 7.3 per cent down on its 2010 tally at the end of the first quarter, when the overall market had eased 1.3 per cent.

Another contributing factor is Toyota’s ageing model line-up – an issue that is about to be addressed with a vengeance. A new Yaris and facelifted HiLux will be among the first cabs off the rank in the next three months, and then the focus shifts to the all-new Australian-made Camry late in the year.

Throw in increased supply of existing models and Toyota is looking good for a big second half.

Fellow Australian manufacturers Holden and Ford also have plenty to look forward to in the next six months, with Holden’s new Australian-built Cruze hatchback and Korean-built Barina in the pipeline, and Ford’s all-new Focus and – critically – EcoLPi Falcon on the launch pad.

Ford has been fighting the large-car battle with one hand tied behind its back without an LPG contender this year, so the arrival of the new liquid-injected version comes none too soon for its fleet sales department.

As well, we will see the full effect of the new-look Territory on Ford sales in the second half, as it only started arriving in showrooms in real volumes in June, bringing the new V6 diesel and other goodies.

The full facelifted Falcon with its much-hyped EcoBoost four-cylinder engine, however, will not arrive in time to impact 2011 sales.

So far this year, Ford is running closer to the average industry pace than the other two local car-makers – down 8.1 per cent – although it is coming off a lower base.

Down 8.9 per cent, Holden nevertheless has been buoyed by increased sales of its locally made Cruze small sedan – up 13.4 per cent this year – that is starting to shape as a potential rival to its stablemate, the Commodore, as Holden’s – and Australia’s – top-selling car.

As hatchbacks make up about half of all small-car sales in this country, the arrival of the Cruze hatch in the last quarter of the year is likely to tip the balance in the favour of the smaller sibling, especially if a fuel price spike happens any time soon.

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EV interests unite

Electric Vehicle Alliance forms to help key players work through main issues

By RON HAMMERTON

KEY stakeholders in the introduction of electric vehicles in Australia have formed a peak body, the Electric Vehicle Alliance (EVA), to smooth the road for new-generation cars that are starting to arrive on our roads.

Most of the motor industry’s heavyweight national associations, covering motor manufacturers and importers, parts-makers, state motoring clubs, automotive engineers and motor retail trades, have signed up to the new organisation, along with the Energy Networks Association (ENA), representing the energy industry.

They have joined with academic organisations such as Perth’s Curtin University and Melbourne-based AutoCRC to work through the myriad issues concerning the new technology, including regulations, training and energy supply impact.

Although the organisation has yet to find its final form, the member organisations say they are nevertheless already using the channels created by the alliance to exchange information and consult on various issues confronting the new vehicles.

EVA chair Henry O’Clery – veteran campaigner for low-emissions vehicles in Australia and founder of the LEV Automotive Partnership – said the new alliance grew out of discussions between representatives of several of the stakeholders who kept bumping into one another at low-emissions vehicles events.

He said it became clear that a single peak body was needed to disseminate vital information, engage with governments at all levels and assist communication between stakeholders.

“About a year ago we started inviting industry associations to join us, and then we added another one, and then another one, and now we have 10 member organisations,” he said.

So far, the organisation has no staff or permanent quarters, with Mr O’Clery co-ordinating it as part of Future Climate Australia.

Last week, five companies with a stake in the emerging industry, including Better Place, Michelin, the RACV, VACC and Nissan, helped to fund an EVA seminar of members and guests in Melbourne as part of Australian Automotive Week and the Australian International Motor Show.

Pilot studies show EV owners shrug off range anxiety to drive further than others

Continued from page 10

Prof King said the UK had set a target of 1.7 million EVs and plug-in hybrids by 2020 to put it on track for its 90 per cent CO2 reduction target.

She said modelling by her team in the UK predicted that EVs would become economically viable for regular motorists between 2015 and 2018, depending on fuel price, carbon price and the rate of the reduction in the cost of batteries.

“I have been enormously surprised in the past three years alone how fast battery costs appear to have been falling,” she said.

Prof King said pilot schemes such as trial of 340 EVs in the UK and 50 electric industry associations to join us, and then we added another one, and then another one, and now we have 10 member organisations,” he said.

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Mini E cars in Berlin was shedding new light on use of EVs on public roads.

“In Berlin, they compared 50 Mini E drivers with 50 standard Minis and BMW 1 Series, and they discovered their Mini E drivers actually drove further on average every day than their internal combustion engine vehicle drivers,” she said.

“They (Mini Es) have a 200km range, which for 90 per cent of them is quite satisfactory.”

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By IAN PORTER
CAR-MAKERS spend a lot of money attending motor shows because they believe it helps sell more cars.

But it is difficult to think of a more competitive environment than to be surrounded by all your rivals shouting at motor show customers from their own stands.

Concept cars can help attract people to your stand, but the local manufacturers do not tend to have the spare millions needed to produce a show-stopper these days.

So the task of attracting people to your stand becomes a more subtle, specialised affair and this is where a brand communications company called Imagination spins its magic.

The company has been working with the Ford group overseas for decades now, helping the auto giant get the Ford group overseas for decades

Imagination works with Ford at the 2010 Australian International Motor Show in Sydney, and this year’s show customers from their own stands.

The Ford stand in Melbourne included a vehicle simulator.

“The dwell time on the Ford stand was an average 38 minutes, versus seven minutes elsewhere,” he said.

This year in Melbourne, the Ford stand was the largest in the show and brimming with interactive displays and activities.

There were balancing discs connected to a video screen, where you move your weight on the disc to guide a “car” along a simulated test track on the screen. There were push-button models demonstrating Ford’s EcoBoost engines and the importance of aerodynamics to fuel economy, an Aussie rules handball game, a super-sized slot car track and a magician, who managed to weave Ford’s story into his act.

Perhaps the showpiece was the Focus Theatre – a Focus with a special covering on the outside of the windscreen. Sit in the front seats and an interactive movie is projected onto the screen from above the car. The movie extols the virtues of Ford’s technology and takes ‘passengers’ through the various systems and knobs around the dashboard.

As if to ensure that no installation is missed, visitors to the stand were given a Ford Passport that they had to have stamped at each station. If they collected all 12 stamps, they won a prize.

“Imagination’s aim is to actively surprise and delight visitors. At the last motor show in Sydney, we achieved the longest dwell times of any stand, and visitor feedback was overwhelmingly enthusiastic,” Mr Wilson said.

The Ford stand was voted the most popular in the show, but Mr Wilson says “experiential” show stands are only part of the Imagination story.

Ford now calls in the company very early on in the gestation of a new vehicle. In fact, Ford’s global marketing chief Jim Farley brings in all the advertising and marketing experts as well.

“They bring us together right there and then, so we are all moving ahead as one team, so we are all informing what the vehicle needs to do, how we bring the message to life,” he said. “Rather than just saying we’ve got the car now, here’s what it looks like, come up with an idea, we are all informing the process for many years in the lead up to that car being ready for market.”

Imagination follows through right to the launch of a new model. It designed the Ranger launch in Sydney last year with the new ute being dropped out of a container suspended in mid-air.

Mr Wilson says the essence of Imagination’s work is to add creativity to the client’s business. In Ford’s case, that means getting the message out to dealers, employees and customers alike.

Based in London, Imagination works for many high-profile companies including the BBC, Aston Martin, British Airways, Disneyland, Jaguar, Land Rover, Mazda, Shell, Sony and Vodafone.
THE Redline Edition was introduced as part of Holden’s Series II VE Commodore range as a (slightly) performance-enhanced SS-V model treated to a lick of chrome, bigger brakes and, in sedan form, tauter suspension. As such, it is the poster pin-up for every V8-loving teenager of the ‘70s and ‘80s who faces family responsibilities in the naughties. In Sportwagon trim as tested here, however, the VEII SS-V Redline Edition delivers the knockout combination of style and substance with cargo and kid-carrying practicality.

BIG CALIBER DISCOUNT
DODGE has lopped $6500 – almost a quarter of the vehicle’s price – from its boxy Caliber five-door hatchback. The distinctive Dodge can now be had for $23,500 in SXT guise, representing a cut of 21.7 per cent from the previous $30,000 price point.

The price cut, which came into effect on June 17, helped the smallest model in Dodge’s Australian range achieve a comparatively stellar 48 sales in June, its best sales month since November 2008.

AGENT ORANGE SMART
LAST year, it was the ‘Jaffa’ – a Mercedes-Benz C63 concept car in eyeball-searing orange – at the Australian International Motor Show in Sydney, and this year in Melbourne Benz went to the other extreme, revealing the ‘Jaffette’ – a Smart ForTwo special edition in the same ‘look-at-me’ Night Orange exterior.

This time, however, the model is for sale, with 15 of the special Smarts destined for Australian buyers at a $2800 premium over the base $19,990 52kW ForTwo Coupe MHD.

CHERY J11 PRICE CUT
AUSTRALIA’S cheapest SUV – the Chinese-made Chery J11 – can now be had for even less money following the introduction of a $2000 cash-back offer, bringing the starting price to $17,990 driveaway.

The move comes a little over two months after Chery introduced a similar offer on its J1 city car, lopping $1000 off the starting price to make that model Australia’s cheapest new car outright at $10,990 driveaway.

Like the J1 offer, customers will be given the choice of taking a $2000 discount on the car or paying the original starting price and getting $2000 cash back.

The promotion is scheduled to end on August 31. However, as with the J1 cash-back deal, Chery says it could continue beyond that point if the exchange rate stays favourable.

MURANO UPGRADE
NISSAN has announced a mild makeover for its two-year-old second-generation Murano, which brings a number of cosmetic and equipment enhancements at the expense of modest price increases for the two-variant mid-size premium SUV range.

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