



AI IMAGE



Rammed

The advertising that's killing our climate goals

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Preface

Australia's SUV and 4X4 obsession is a carbon time bomb. Our vehicle emissions are on the increase because we are buying more and more carbon-belching road hogs.

The IPCC's 2023 warning is clear: Act now or pay dearly. Yet, Australia lacks laws restricting the advertising of these gas-guzzling beasts.

Carmakers spent \$600 million on ads in 2022 and consumers are largely kept in the dark about emissions, unlike overseas.

Comms Declare's Fossil Ad Ban campaign advocates for a ban on advertising fossil fuels. However, as this report shows, banning advertising for the most oversized vehicles is also a sensible and achievable method of reducing emissions.

**Australia, it's time to take real action
in the fight against car pollution.**

003



To help achieve net zero, communicators must be aware, declare and act.

commsdeclare.org

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This paper was first published in July 2023.

Contents

Summary	4
The Problem: Australians are increasingly choosing to supersize their cars, and emissions are on the up	5
The Dirt: Automotive advertising is slamming the brakes on Australia's clean transport transition	8
• SUVs and 4X4s deliver big profits	9
• Big buck advertising fuels demand	10
The Numbers: Environmental impact of big spender advertising	12
• The FCAI Code	16
• The brand shield effect	17
• The hidden costs of SUVs and 4X4s	18
• Advertising examples	19
The Nitty Gritty: Brand sponsorship case studies	24
• RAM 1500	25
• Ford Ranger	30
• Toyota LandCruiser	34
Clearing the Air: Overseas bans on fossil fuel advertising	38
• Solutions	40
Closing Summary	41

**Australians deserve
transparency from
automakers.**

**This is already being
done elsewhere -
it's time for Australia
to catch up.**

Summary

Transport accounts for 18%¹ of all carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in Australia, 62% of which is produced by private passenger vehicles.²

Reductions made in transport-related CO₂ emissions since 2002 levelled off in recent years due to the growing popularity of large vehicles with greater-than-average emissions - according to official government data.³

But an independent study from Transport Energy/Emission Research⁴ says emissions may in fact be on the increase again because SUVs and 4X4s are more popular than ever in Australia, and that government data is flawed.

And the need to reduce carbon emissions in all sectors is more imperative than ever. In March 2023, the International Panel on Climate Change issued a damning and unequivocal message⁵: we can still act on climate change but we must act quickly, and now.

In other words, for Australia's transport sector to play its part, the growth of the SUV and 4X4 segments must be reigned in. Without action, transport will be Australia's highest source of emissions by 2030.⁶

However, in Australia, there is no mandated code or ban restricting the advertising of gas guzzlers. Brands blithely align high-polluting vehicles with the enjoyment of activities in nature, all the while causing damage to it.

Carmakers spent \$600 million on automotive advertising in Australia in 2022; more than 60% of this was on brand sponsorship arrangements aligning with major sporting events, environmental initiatives, home improvement, music events, social and medical services, adventure and holidays.⁷

All these sponsorships are designed to build brand awareness and trust in customers. In the case of environmental initiatives, this is outright greenwashing.

Meanwhile, brands do not make consumers directly aware of the emissions intensity of vehicles they are selling to consumers during the marketing cycle - as they are increasingly required overseas.

Comms Declare has created the Fossil Ad Ban campaign with the aims of updated laws on the advertising of consumer goods and services that have a disproportionate climate footprint, such as petrol, methane gas, SUVs, and airlines.

¹<https://www.ntc.gov.au/news/australias-car-emissions-flatline-evs-take>

²<https://www.climateworkscentre.org/news/australias-transport-emissions-the-role-of-electric-vehicles-in-reaching-zero-emissions/>

³<https://www.ntc.gov.au/news/australias-car-emissions-flatline-evs-take>

⁴<https://www.transport-e-research.com/publications>

⁵<https://theconversation.com/it-can-be-done-it-must-be-done-ipcc-delivers-definitive-report-on-climate-change-and-where-to-now-201763>

⁶<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/energy/transport>

⁷<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1LzltjbqXq0KS1wDMOASTJI53VGJaFRbX36EYOyDOvPs/edit?usp=sharing>

005

Australians are increasingly choosing to supersize their cars, and emissions are on the up.

The Problem

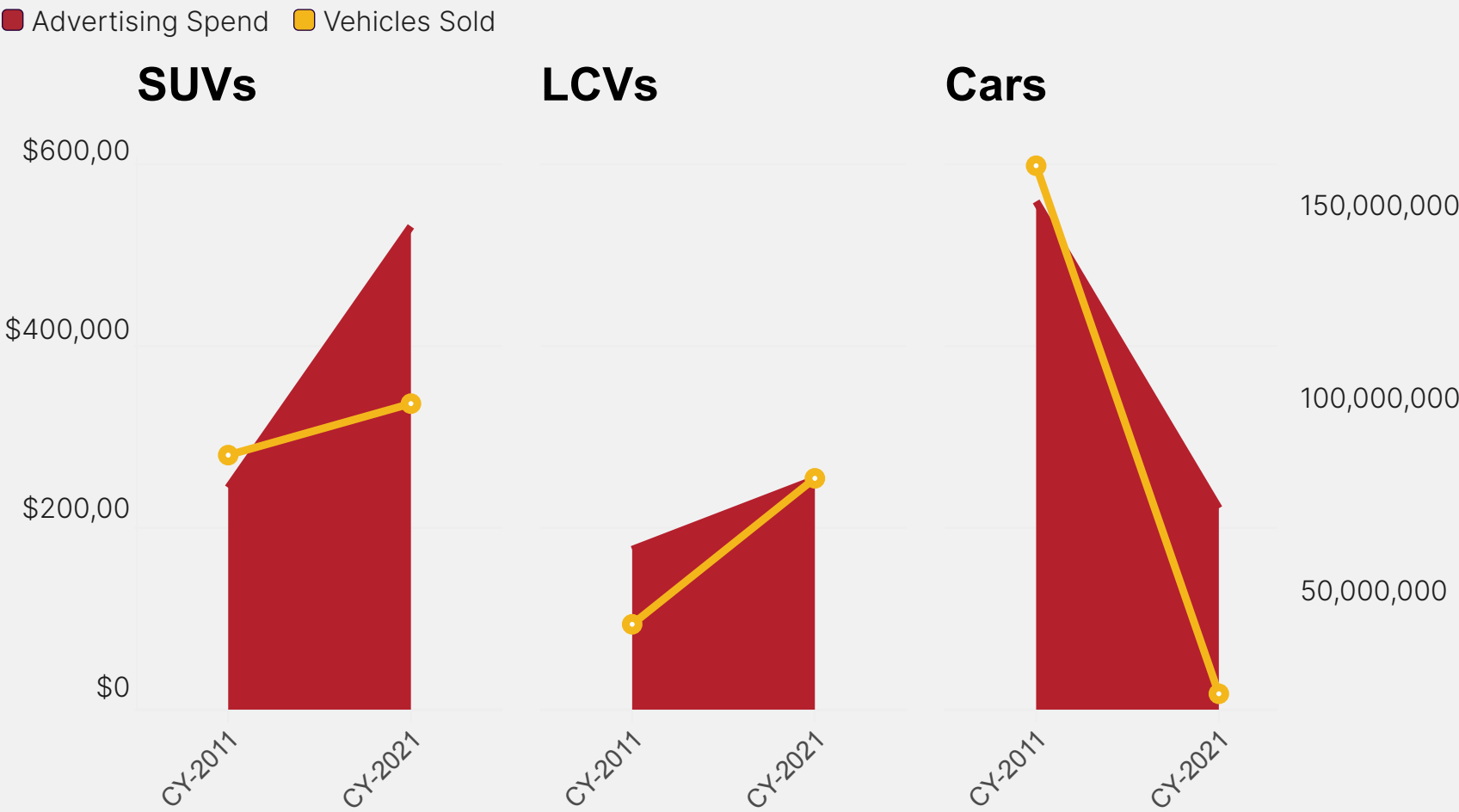
Globally, sales of SUVs continue to rise, the IEA reports.⁸ In Australia, SUVs and LCVs (light commercial vehicles, the majority of which are typically 4X4 utes) have become the most popular selling segments.⁹

More than half (55%) of all new passenger vehicles sold in Australia in 2021 had an emissions intensity of more than 160 g/km, compared with just 10% in Europe.¹⁰

SUVs and light commercial vehicle sales have increased 80%, coinciding with a 200% jump in advertising spend.

Over the same period, passenger car advertising halved (55%), with sales also plunging 63% (52% to 19% of the market).

Automotive Ad Spend vs Segment Sales
2011, 2021



Source: SMI • Compiled by Bridie Schmidt for Comms Declare

⁸<https://www.iea.org/commentaries/as-their-sales-continue-to-rise-suvs-global-co2-emissions-are-nearing-1-billion-tonnes>

⁹Vfacts

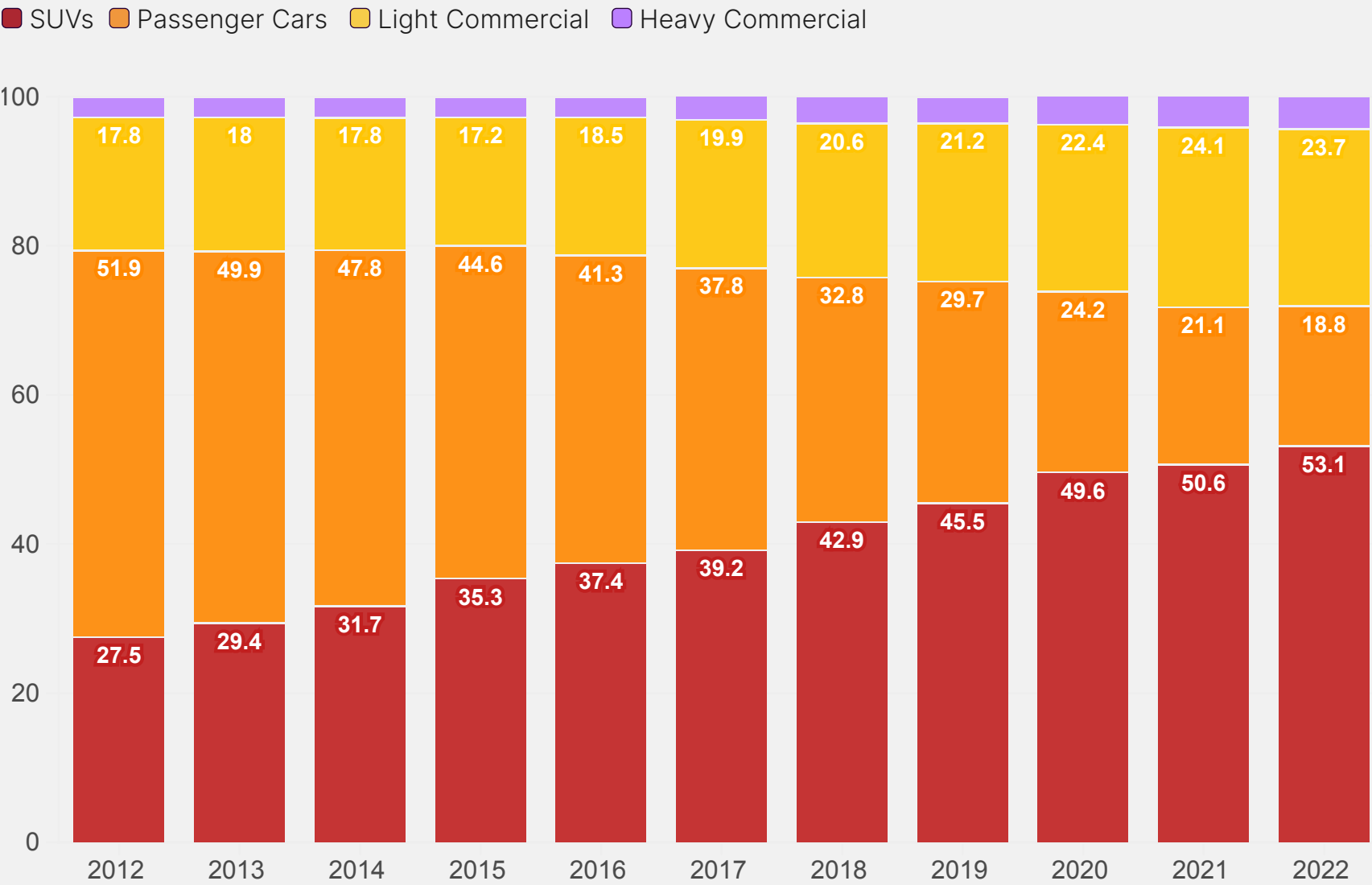
¹⁰<https://www.ntc.gov.au/news/australias-car-emissions-flatline-evs-take>

“The Australian fleet is unique due to its large portion of SUVs in the on-road fleet, often with four-wheel-drive capability.”

The Problem ↴

As noted by Smit and Surawski in September 2023, “the Australian fleet is unique due to its large portion of SUVs in the on-road fleet, often with four-wheel-drive capability.”

New vehicle sales by segment, Australia 2012-2022 (%)



Source: Vfacts via The Guardian¹¹

Official data from the National Transport Commission (NTC) said in September 2022 that Australia’s transport emissions are flatlining.¹²

However, recent independent research showed that the emissions from SUVs are likely higher: from 16 to as much as 65% above official figures.¹³ Shockingly, this means that our transport emissions may actually be increasing without us even knowing.

¹¹<http://web.archive.org/web/20230430060553/https://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2023/mar/19/suvs-are-more-popular-than-ever-in-australia-but-there-is-a-downside>

¹²<https://www.ntc.gov.au/news/australias-car-emissions-flatline-evs-take>

¹³<https://theconversation.com/we-may-be-underestimating-just-how-bad-carbon-belching-suvs-are-for-the-climate-and-for-our-health-190743>

007

...ute-sellers will likely turn to other means to market high-polluting vehicles.

The Problem

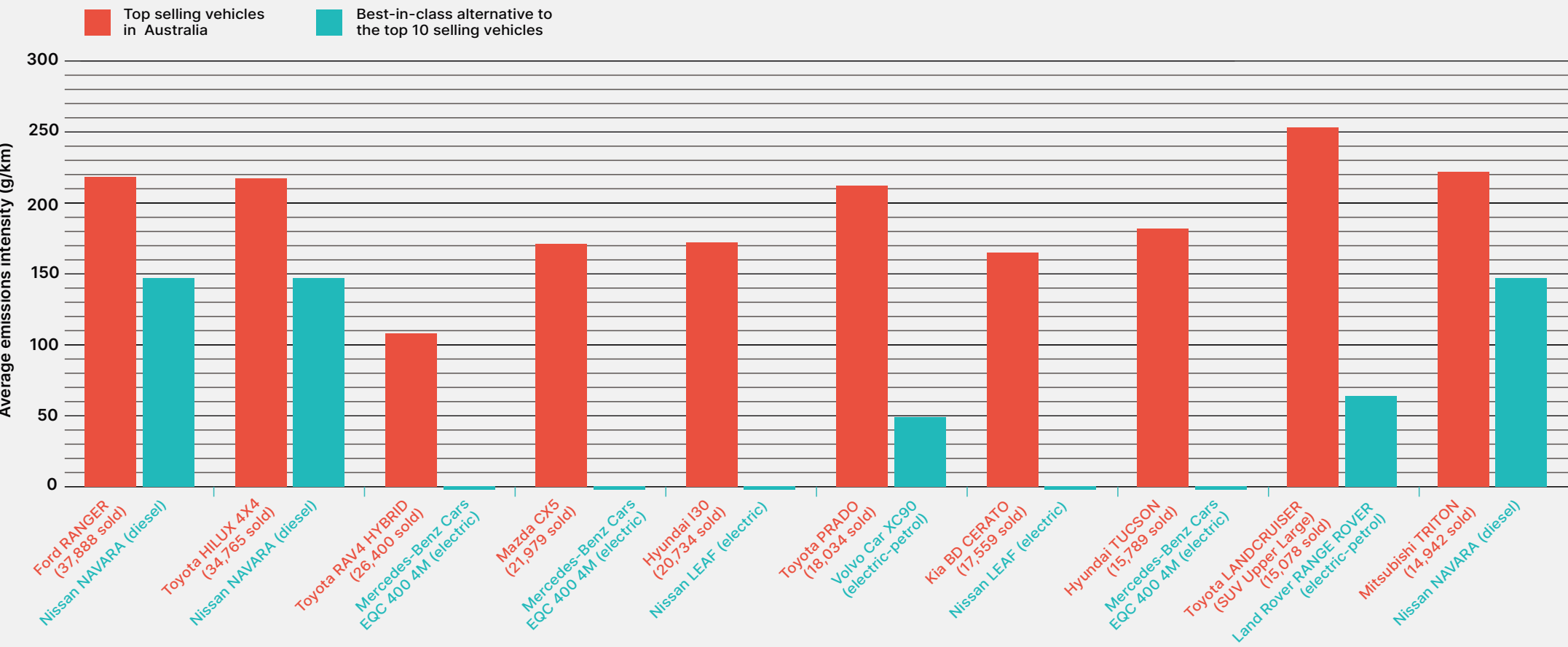
In the case of light commercial vehicles, uptake has jumped since the introduction of the \$150,000 instant asset write-off in late 2020. Thankfully, this tax incentive has been slashed to a \$20,000 threshold starting from the end of the 2022/23 financial year.¹⁴

However, this only means ute-sellers will likely turn to other means to market high-polluting vehicles.

As highlighted in the 2020 NTC chart below there are many low or zero-emission equivalents available for best-selling vehicles - but not for 4X4s and large SUVs. There are some luxury electric large SUV options and one electric ute option, but by and large this remains the case today.

Carbon dioxide emissions intensity for new Australian light vehicles 2020

Top 10 selling vehicles in Australia



Source: NTC¹⁵

¹⁴<https://www.carexpert.com.au/car-news/how-the-instant-asset-write-off-scheme-has-been-slashed>
¹⁵<https://www.ntc.gov.au/sites/default/files/assets/files/Infographic%20-%20Carbon%20dioxide%20emissions%20intensity%20for%20new%20Australian%20light%20vehicles%202020.pdf>

008

The Dirt:

Automotive advertising is slamming the brakes on Australia's clean transport transition

SUVs and 4X4s deliver bigger profits.

009

The Dirt



Car giants Toyota and BMW are spending \$4.5 billion globally on sports sponsorship to boost their image and green credentials, according to a report by the Badvertising campaign.¹⁶

This greenwashing strategy contradicts their continued production of polluting internal combustion engine cars. In 2021, these companies sold over 12.5 million such vehicles, estimated to emit around 855 million tonnes of CO2.

In Australia, more than 60% of automotive advertising expenditure was spent on these image-boosting strategies.

Model-specific advertising campaigns create appeal for polluting vehicles by aligning them with adventure in, and enjoyment of, nature.

For example, the biggest spender, Toyota, aligns with several codes of footy, the Olympic and Paralympic Games, cricket, Tamworth's country music festival, motor racing, and a national tree planting initiative.

And its strategy is clearly working: Toyota ranks as the most trusted global brand according to Yougov's Auto Rankings 2023 report.¹⁷

The irony is that transitioning the transport industry to electric costs money, and carmakers say they have to fund the EV transition with profits from gas guzzlers.¹⁸

GM says it has to "squeeze as much profit as it can out of its pickup trucks and sport-utility vehicles. In other words, the gas guzzlers of today will foot the bill for the electric cars of tomorrow."¹⁹

Likewise, Ford is leaning heavily on profits of its best-selling products while its EV business bleeds billions. It doesn't expect to make an operating margin until 2026.²⁰

Using this logic, carmakers are causing more damage by increasing SUV and 4X4 sales, and hence emissions, to fund a goal to reduce emissions. Practically every SUV and 4X4 sold today will be on the road in 20 years, burning fossil fuels.

It just doesn't make sense.

And it doesn't have to be this way. Tesla earns eight times the profit per vehicle than Toyota.²¹ The Model Y has just become the most popular vehicle worldwide²², showing it is possible for carmakers to sell zero-emissions SUVs, without increasing gas-guzzler sales.

¹⁶<https://www.badverts.org/latest/car-makers-blocking-climate-action-spend-billions-on-sports-sponsorship-new-report>

¹⁷<https://business.yougov.com/content/8028-auto-rankings-2023>

¹⁸<https://www.smh.com.au/national/why-is-everyone-buying-truckzillas-that-are-too-big-for-our-streets-20230511-p5d7iy.html>

¹⁹<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/10/business/gm-profits-electric-cars.html>

²⁰<https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/fords-path-electric-glory-requires-rocket-fuel-2023-03-23/>

²¹<https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Automobiles/Tesla-earns-8-times-more-profit-than-Toyota-per-car>

²²<https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/china-was-top-market-tesla-model-y-worlds-best-selling-car-q1-2023-05-30/>

Big buck
advertising
fuels demand.

Over the past decade, where and what carmakers spend ad dollars on has changed dramatically.

Brand sponsorship continues to be the largest portion of ad spend, but more money is increasingly spent on digital media (\$300 million in 2022 compared with just \$66.5 million in 2010.)

Television is no longer the biggest attractor of the almighty advertising dollar, although it remains a large player (\$190 million in 2022, compared to \$300 million in 2010.)

More importantly, spending on SUVs and light commercial vehicles has increased dramatically.

Advertising of SUVs and light commercial vehicles jumped 200% in the last decade, coinciding with an 80% increase in sales (42% in 2011 compared to 77% of the market in 2021).

As social media and digital platforms invade almost every aspect of our lives, ad spends on brand sponsorship via digital channels exploded fivefold from \$38 million in 2010 to \$194 million in 2022.

Likewise, the annual digital spend on SUVs has shot up sevenfold from \$7.8 million in 2010 to \$51.5 million in 2022.

And, in 2010 just \$1.6 million was spent advertising light commercial vehicles on digital platforms. In 2022, that figure skyrocketed by a factor of 24 to \$38.3 million.²³

The Dirt ↴

²³<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1LzltjbqXq0KS1wDMOASTJl53VGJaFRbX36EYOyDOvPs/edit?usp=sharing>

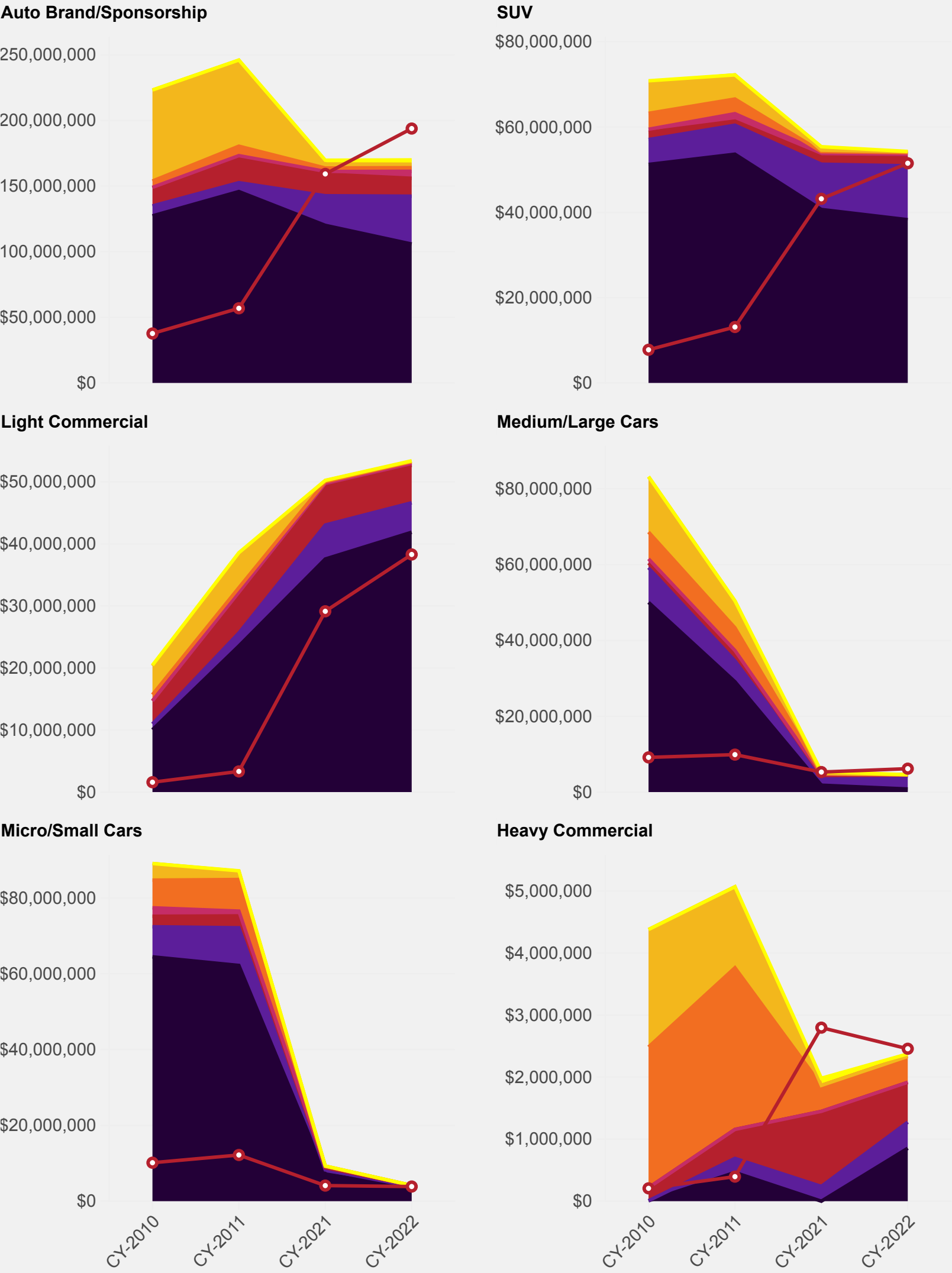
Automotive Advertising Spending

The Dirt

COMMS DECLARE REPORT - RAMMED

By Segment and Media Type; 2010, 2011-2021, 2022

Digital Television Outdoor Radio Cinema Magazines Newspapers Other

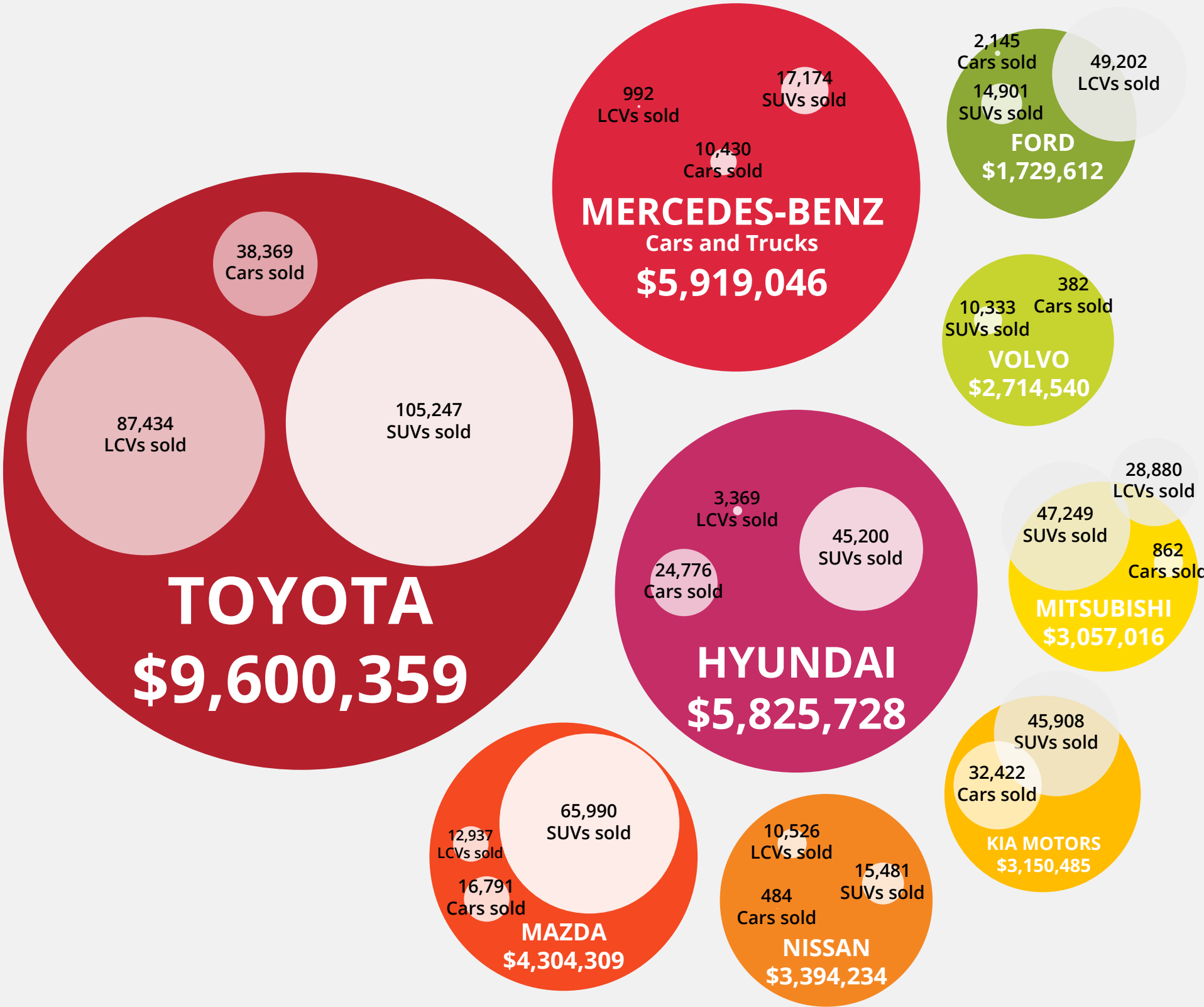


Source: SMI • Compiled by Bridie Schmidt for Comms Declare

The Numbers: Environmental Impact of Big Spender Advertising

Automotive Digital Advertising Spend by Brand, and Units sold by Segment, 2022.

The Numbers ↴



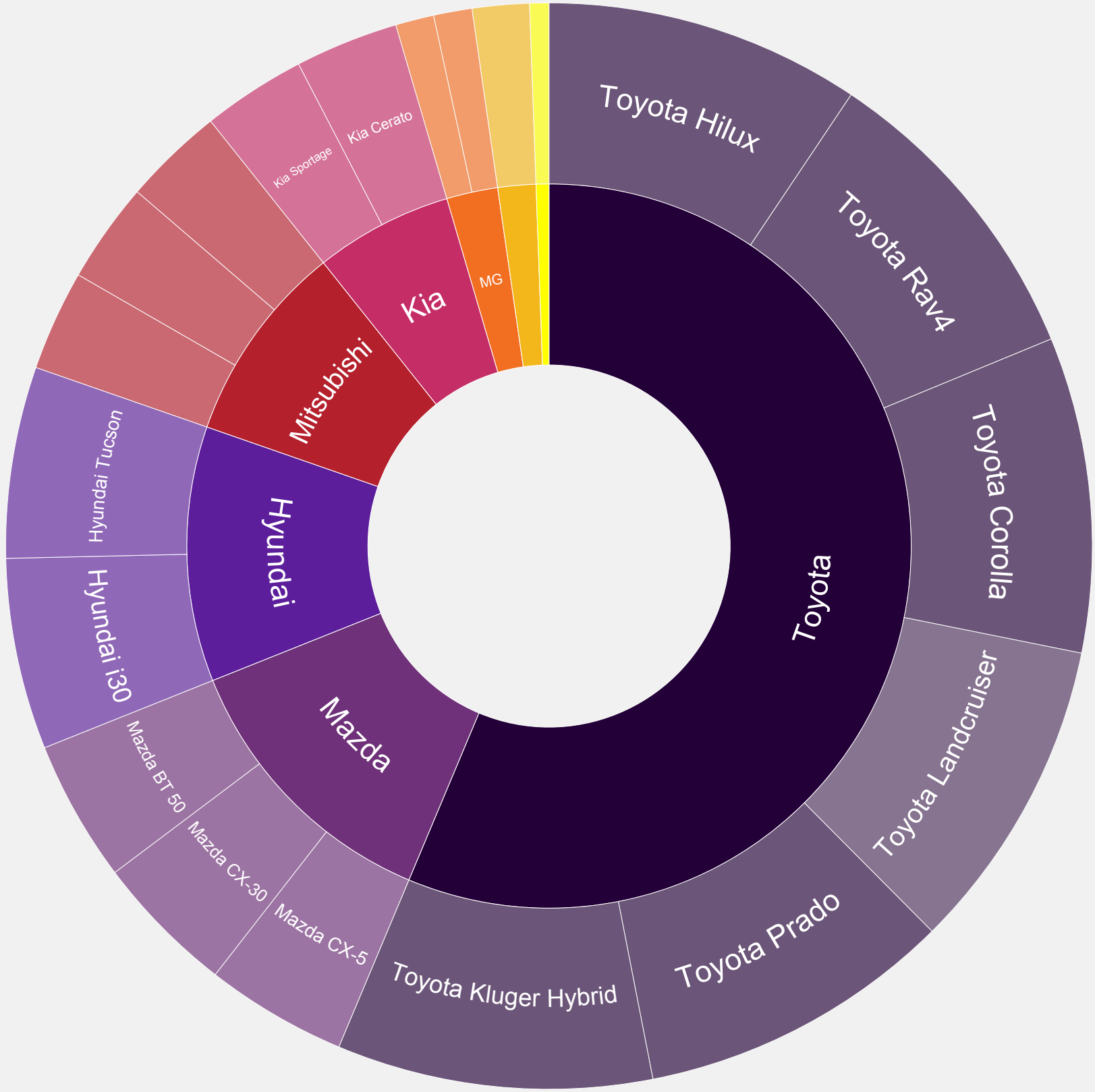
The biggest spender on digital automotive advertising in Australia is Toyota at \$A10 million. It sold almost 200,000 SUVs and LCVs in 2022 - 20% of all the vehicles sold that year.

This was followed by Mercedes-Benz and Hyundai at \$A6 million each, with Mazda and Nissan following behind at \$A4.3 million and \$A3.3 million respectively.

Source: Pathmatics, Vfacts • Compiled by Bridie Schmidt for Comms Declare

Total Sales, Digital Ad Spend (\$AUD), Mean CO2 combined

Advertising Impact of
Top 20 Vehicles 2022.



By compiling these figures along with the mean CO2 emissions per kilometre (combined) for the most advertised model ranges, we have visualised the CO2 impact of the advertising dollar of these brands above.

It shows that the biggest impact is by and large by Toyota, and five of the six vehicles used in the analysis are SUVs. Only the RAV4 and Kluger are currently available in a hybrid configuration.

Source: Pathmatics, Green Vehicle Guide* Just 1.57% of Outlander sales in 2022 were PHEVs (CO2e of 35-43g/km)²⁴

²⁴<https://www.drive.com.au/news/australias-best-selling-hybrids-phevs-2022/>

The Numbers ↴

How we
calculated
the Advertising
Impact.

The Numbers ↴

Brand	Top 20 Models 2022	Units Sold	Mean CO2e (Comb.)	Tonnes CO2e Impact/km (Sales x Mean CO2e)	Total Digital Spend (\$AUD)
Toyota	Toyota Hilux	64,391	203	13.07	\$9,600,859
Toyota	Toyota Rav4	34,845	116	4.04	\$9,600,859
Toyota	Toyota Corolla	25,284	119	3.01	\$9,600,859
Toyota	Toyota LandCruiser	24,542	274	6.72	\$9,600,859
Toyota	Toyota Prado	21,102	254	5.36	\$9,600,859
Toyota	Toyota Kluger Hybrid	12,562	128	1.61	\$9,600,859
Hyundai	Hyundai i30	21,166	167	3.53	\$5,825,329
Hyundai	Hyundai Tucson	17,870	171	3.06	\$5,825,329
Mazda	Mazda CX-5	27,062	169	4.57	\$4,304,015
Mazda	Mazda CX-30	13,891	149	2.07	\$4,304,015
Mazda	Mazda BT 50	12,937	179	2.32	\$4,304,015
Kia	Kia Sportage	18,792	176	3.31	\$3,150,105
Kia	Kia Cerato	12,354	168	2.08	\$3,150,105
Mitsubishi	Mitsubishi Triton	27,436	220	6.04	\$3,056,648
Mitsubishi	Mitsubishi ASX	12,753	179	2.28	\$3,056,648
Mitsubishi	Mitsubishi Outlander	19,546	178	3.48	\$3,056,648
Ford	Ford Ranger	47,479	201	9.54	\$1,729,404
MG	MG ZS	22,466	53	1.19	\$1,169,727
MG	MG MG3	16,168	151	2.44	\$1,169,727
Isuzu	Isuzu Ute D-Max	24,336	205	4.99	\$583,545

The FCAI Code

The Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI) has a voluntary advertising code²⁵ that “supports a responsible approach to advertising for motor vehicles” but which limits its focus to road safety and allows use of off-road locations to “legitimately demonstrate the capabilities and performance of such vehicles.”

While it asks carmakers to refrain from “Deliberate and significant environmental damage, particularly in advertising for off-road vehicles,” it does not adequately define the scope of environmental damage.

The last review was published in December 2022, and the FCAI undertakes to review the code every five years. The latest consultation for the code included no electric vehicle or environmental organisations.

At the same time, Influence Map said in May 2023 that the FCAI along with Toyota has secretly worked behind the scenes to undermine Australia’s climate policy by pushing weak fuel efficiency standards.²⁶

The Numbers ↴

²⁵<https://www.fcai.com.au/news/codes-of-practice/view/publication/161>
²⁶<https://influencemap.org/briefing/The-FCAI-and-Australian-Climate-Policy-22253>

The brand shield effect.

In a world where trust and reputation is everything to brands, a groundbreaking 2020 study from the University of Sydney and Tilburg University²⁷ offers a fascinating insight into how companies “shield” their image.

The research revealed a powerful protection against negative press: advertising.

Put simply, the more a brand invests in advertising within a news medium, the less likely that medium is to cover any corporate social irresponsibility (CSI) events associated with the brand.

It’s a compelling strategy, turning advertising from a tool of promotion into a guard against reputation damage. Brands, it seems, have found a way to protect their image, simply by leveraging their advertising dollars.

This revelation underscores the relationship between media advertising and corporations, where silence can be bought and image is meticulously curated.

The Numbers ↴

²⁷<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022242920911907>

The hidden costs of SUVs and 4X4s.

The Numbers ↴

The health implications of SUVs and 4X4s due to air and noise pollution were highlighted in a 2019 EVC report. The research uncovered the grim reality of air pollution deaths in the Sydney-Newcastle-Wollongong region, attributable to vehicle emissions, and the social costs of vehicle noise pollution.

The report found that the Sydney-Newcastle-Wollongong area alone had transport-related health costs of \$3 billion²⁸ a year and argued deaths from respiratory disease caused by transport emissions should be added to the road toll.

Air pollution from motor vehicles kills over 1,700 Australians per year.

It also found that “each internal combustion engine vehicle (ICEV) creates average health costs of \$7,110 over a ten-year lifetime.”

Additionally, it found that “noise pollution from road traffic is estimated to cause \$1.4 billion in social costs per year in NSW” alone.

These findings underscore the urgent need for a shift in our vehicle purchase trends, and the need for carmakers to be transparent in the advertising cycle about the products they sell, because they cause damage to not only the environment but also the health of our society at large.

This is especially damning as the money spent on fossil-fuelled vehicle advertising makes carmakers complicit in the deaths of 1,700 Australians a year.

²⁸<https://electricvehiclecouncil.com.au/reports/cleaner-and-safer-roads-for-nsw/>

The pollution paradox.

Automakers tout the prowess of their SUVs and 4X4s, yet candidly admit that many consumers may never exploit these capabilities.

The irony deepens as these internal combustion engine vehicles, notorious for their heightened emissions in urban settings, are marketed.

The incongruity is made even more stark when these vehicles are associated with outdoor leisure activities in pristine landscapes that are rapidly vanishing due to global warming.

A poignant example is the recent dismantling of a ski lift in France, a casualty of infrequent snowfall.²⁹ The paradox of polluters destroying the sports they sponsor was brought to media attention in a recent report by Badvertising.³⁰

Advertising Examples ↴

²⁹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHOMDBxjr6k>

³⁰<https://www.badverts.org/latest/new-badvertising-report-finds-major-polluters-melting-the-snow-of-the-winter-sports-they-sponsor>

020

“We know that some customers will be taking it off-road but we also know that some customers are going to drive it just around their suburb.”

Ford Everest



Play Video

021

**“Travel the whole
world of Australia
in the ute that can go
absolutely anywhere.”**

Nissan Navara



Play Video

022

**“The BT-50 Thunder
UTE is ready to
conquer the weekend
and take on the most
rugged adventures.”**

Mazda BT-50

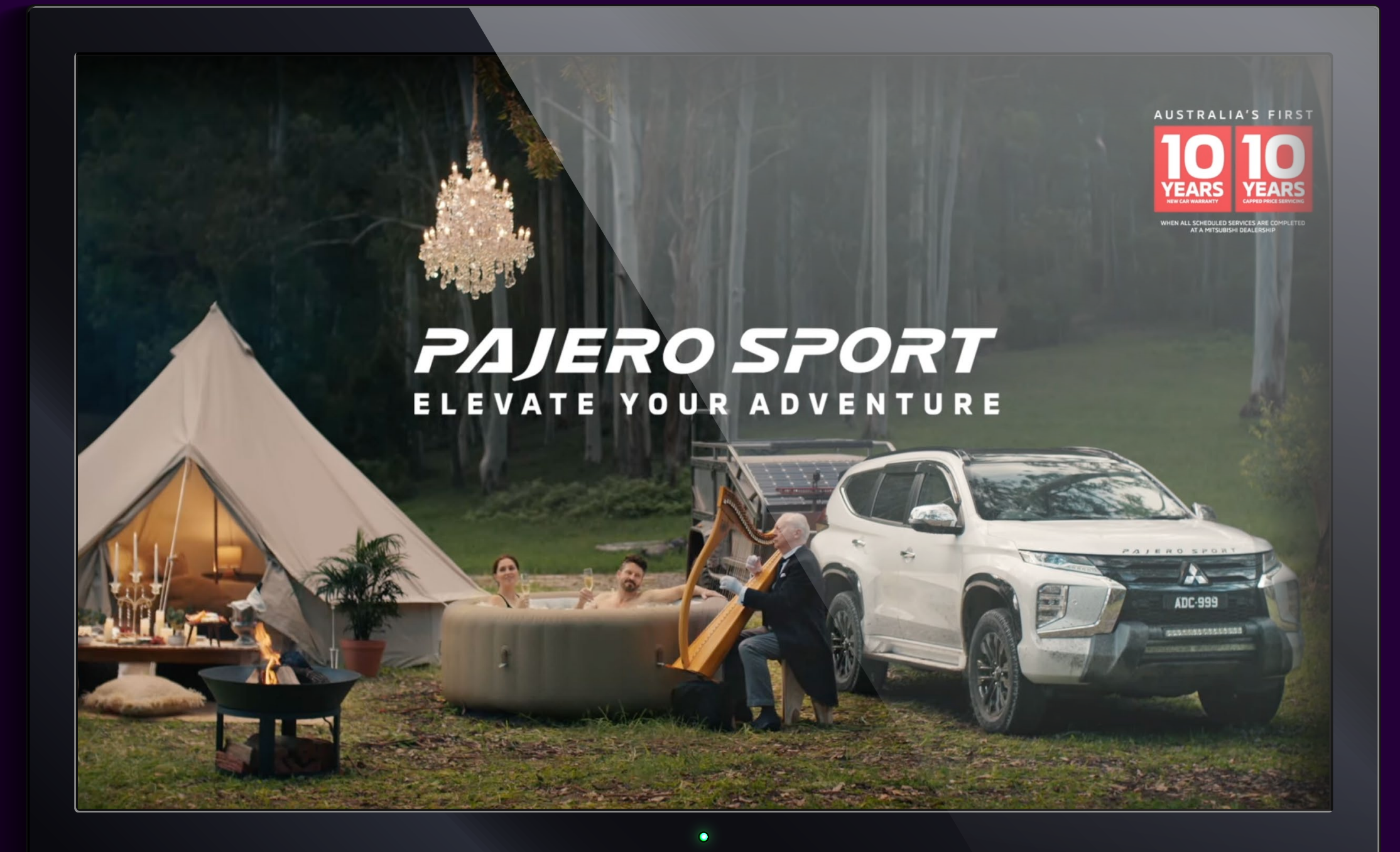


[Play Video](#)

023

“Elevate your
adventure.”

Mitsubishi Pajero Sport



Play Video

The Nitty Gritty: Brand Sponsorship Case Studies

025



Ram 1500

RAM 1500
...among the most
polluting vehicles on
the market.

RAM's sales in 2022 outpaced those of the previous year by a whopping 50%. The lion's share of these sales was attributed to the RAM 1500, a vehicle notorious for its high carbon dioxide emissions as well as its dominating size.³¹

According to its European distributor, the RAM 1500 emits a staggering 278-489 grams of CO2 per kilometre,³² placing it among the most polluting vehicles on the market. Intriguingly, RAM is absent from the Australian government's Green Vehicle Guide, raising questions about the transparency of its environmental impact.

CO2 emissions (Combined): 489-278g/km

Units Sold 2022: 5,481

Total Digital Spend: \$194,466

Digital Spend on Model Range: \$33,968

Sponsorships: NRL³³, The Australian Farmer³⁴, Red Bull (US)³⁵



Source: Australian Farmer³⁶

Brief

³¹Vfacts

³²<https://www.aeceurope.com/ram-europe/ram-1500-overview/>

³³<https://www.bandt.com.au/nine-unveils-2023-nrl-sponsors/>

³⁴<https://www.theaustralianfarmer.com/digital-book>

³⁵<https://moparinsiders.com/ram-renews-its-partnership-with-red-bull-ktm-factory-racing-for-2023-season/>

³⁶<https://www.theaustralianfarmer.com/digital-book>

This strategic alignment with people who value adventurous, outdoor, and industrious lifestyles strongly contradicts the impacts on health and the environment of these vehicles.

RAM Trucks Australia's primary advertising strategy involves touting the power, towing capacity, and off-road capabilities of its vehicles; for example by depicting its trucks in challenging outdoor environments, to demonstrate the ability to navigate difficult terrains and carry substantial loads.

Yet, it brazenly labelled its target audience as "weekend warriors" in a May 2023 YouTube advertisement, depicting its customers as spending the majority of their time in suburbia, where combustion engine emissions are known to escalate.

In addition to these strategies, RAM leverages sponsorships and partnerships to enhance its brand visibility. In the Australian market, these collaborations span a diverse range of sectors, including sporting events, beverage brands, and agricultural media.

This strategic alignment with people who value adventurous, outdoor, and industrious lifestyles strongly contradicts the impacts on health and the environment of these vehicles.

Furthermore, RAM employs promotional tactics and incentives to attract consumers. One example is its aggressive approach encouraging consumers to take advantage of tax write-offs, as exemplified by a March 2023 advertisement on YouTube.

Case Study

028

Example Mar 2023

RAM
1500



Play Video

029

Example May 2023

RAM
1500



Play Video

030



Ford Ranger

The paradox of Ford, a manufacturer of fossil fuel vehicles, sponsoring “The Block,” a reality TV show that in its 18th season promotes sustainable housing, is jaw-droppingly hypocritical.

Ford partners with reality TV show “The Block” to increase awareness of its SUV line and the Ranger model. A case study conducted by Gemba showed that the sponsorship resulted in a 15% increase in trust and 6% increase in consideration.³⁷

The Ford Ranger is consistently one of the top two most popular vehicles in Australia. In 2022, Ford sold 47,479 units; this meant it came second only to the Toyota Hilux (64,391 units sold.)³⁸ Coupled with a mean CO2e of 201g/km³⁹ for the model range, the Ranger had the second-highest impact score after the Hilux according to our analysis.

CO2 emissions (Combined): 262-182g/km

Units Sold 2022: 47,479

Total Digital Spend: \$1,733,892

Digital Spend on Model Range: \$632,512

Sponsorship: Ford + The Block

Brief

³⁷<https://www.nineforbrands.com.au/case-studies/ford-x-the-block/>

³⁸Vfacts

³⁹Green Vehicle Guide

**“Everybody’s getting
a new Ford Ranger.”**

The paradox of Ford, a manufacturer of fossil fuel vehicles, sponsoring “The Block,” a reality TV show that in its 18th season promotes sustainable housing, is jaw-droppingly hypocritical.

The 18th season of the show, titled “The Block: Tree Change,” features houses built to design specifications that prioritise sustainability and resilience, with a seven-star energy rating.⁴⁰

On the other hand, Ford makes its profits selling fossil-fuelled vehicles. Although the carmaker says it is investing \$50 billion in EV development by 2026, its EV business is still nascent and is not expected to make a profit until late 2026. It has only introduced one EV to the Australian market so far.

This juxtaposition of a fossil fuel carmaker sponsoring a show that says it wants to highlight sustainable living presents a clear example of greenwashing and is a conflict of interest. While Ford is promoting its vehicles within the context of the show, the very nature of these vehicles contradicts the show’s sustainability ethos.

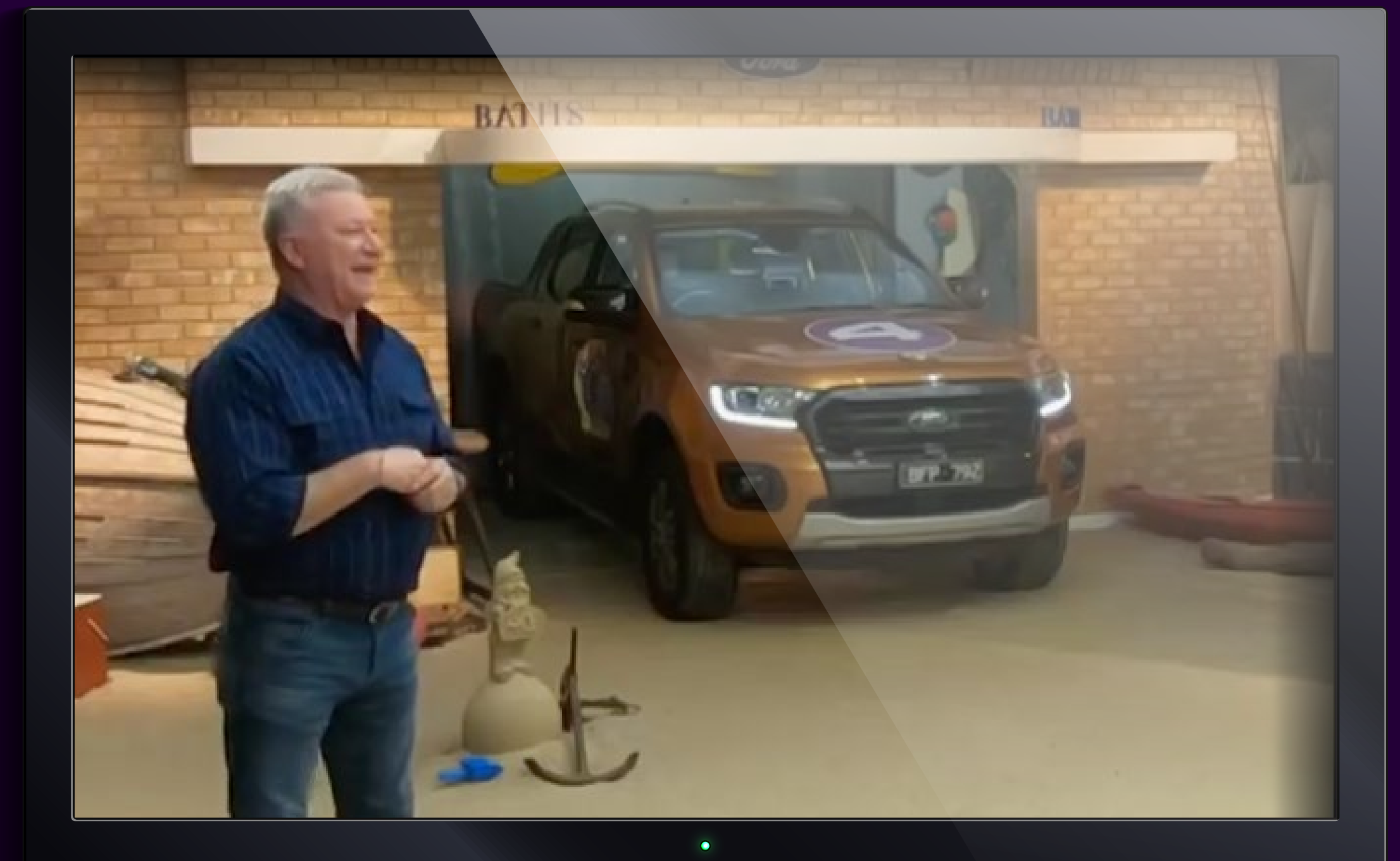
Case Study

⁴⁰<https://mumbrella.com.au/the-blocks-ep-and-nines-sarah-stewart-on-why-the-show-delivers-for-its-clients-749685>

**Ford
Ranger**

033

Example The Block



Play Video

034



Toyota LandCruiser

**The LandCruiser
has the
greatest CO2
emissions per vehicle
of Toyota's range.**

Toyota is hands down the biggest spender on digital advertising in Australia, and uses extensive sponsorships to reach a wide audience.

It holds the largest portion of market share in Australia: 21.4% in 2022, more than double that of the next largest brand, Mazda (9%).

Yet, its leadership role is marred by a disconcerting stance on environmental responsibility. Despite its extensive reach and influence, Toyota has strategically campaigned against bolstering fuel emissions standards and transitioning to cleaner transport.⁴¹

This resistance not only contradicts global efforts to combat climate change but also amplifies the carbon footprint of Australia's transport sector.

The LandCruiser has the greatest CO2 emissions per vehicle of Toyota's range.

CO2 emissions (Combined): 281-250g/km

Units Sold 2022: 24,542

Total Digital Spend: \$9,624,617

Digital Spend on Model Range: \$82

Sponsorship: AFL/AFLW, Olympic and Paralympic Games, Cricket, Toyota Country Music Festival, Toyota GAZOO Racing Australia 86 Series, National Tree Day.

Brief

⁴¹<https://influencemap.org/briefing/The-FCAI-and-Australian-Climate-Policy-22253>

This advocacy effort is seen as an attempt to prolong the role of combustion-powered vehicles in Australia.

The Toyota LandCruiser 300 “Drives Us Home” advertising strategy emphasises the vehicle’s reliability, comfort, and heritage in Australia.

It is designed to resonate with drivers by highlighting the vehicle’s ability to traverse all parts of Australia with ease and comfort, and aligns the LandCruiser with ideas of exploration and building the country.

However, this advertising strategy is at odds with Toyota’s role in undermining fuel efficiency standards in Australia. As outlined by InfluenceMap, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries (FCAI), of which Toyota is a key member, has been actively campaigning to convince policymakers to adopt weak standards.

This advocacy effort is seen as an attempt to prolong the role of combustion-powered vehicles in Australia, thereby slowing down the transition to cleaner, more efficient transport.

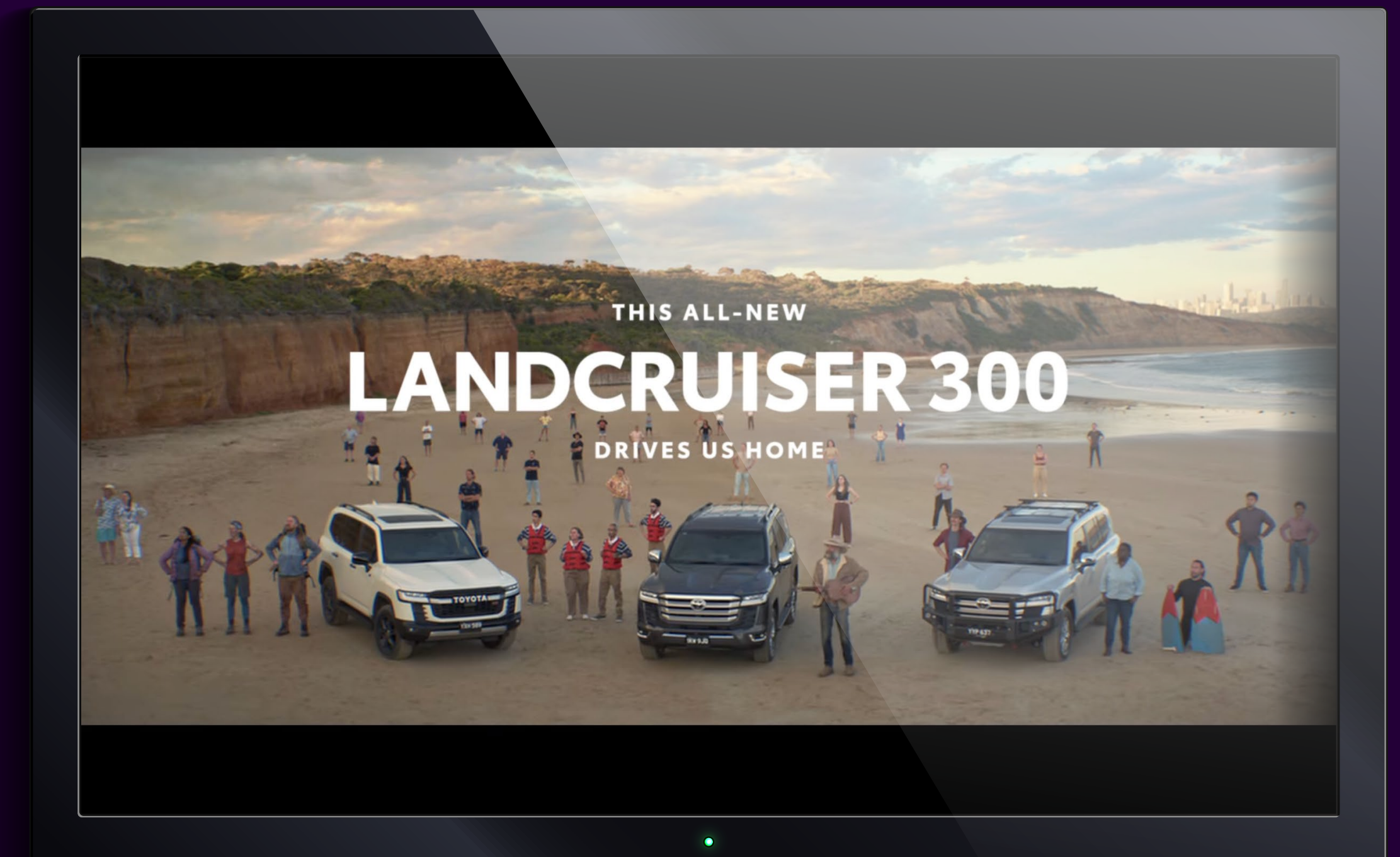
This paradox is particularly stark given the environmental implications of such actions, and is contradictory to the image of reliability and connection with the Australian landscape that Toyota is trying to portray through its LandCruiser 300 advertising campaign. So too is its involvement in National Tree Day.

Case Study

Toyota LandCruiser

037

Example Feb 2022



Play Video

Clearing the Air: Overseas bans on fossil fuel advertising

In 2022, France became the first country in the world to ban advertisements for fossil fuel products.

Clearing the Air

All over the world, people and organisations have started fighting against campaigns that advertise products that burn fossil fuels. France, California, the UK, Netherlands, and the broader European Union have all launched campaigns to ban fossil fuel advertisements.⁴²

Arguably the largest of these campaigns is the “Ban Fossil Fuel Advertising and Sponsorship”⁴³ citizen’s initiative launched in the European Union in 2021. With 350,000 signatories, it is calling for an EU-wide ban on advertising of products that use fossil fuels.

In the UK, a “Badvertising” campaign launched by progressive UK think tank New Weather has proposed a ban on the advertising of all vehicles that emit more than 160g/km of CO₂.⁴⁴

But campaigning is clearly not enough - to be successful in reducing demand for fossil fuel vehicles, laws must be implemented.

In 2022, France became the first country in the world to ban advertisements for fossil fuel products.^{45 46} Among other laws aimed at reducing transport emissions, France also uses carbon labelling to educate consumers about the damaging impact of vehicles they buy.

Whilst vehicles in Australia are sold with carbon labelling stickers on the windscreen post-sale, France takes it a step further by legislating labelling in advertisements and at point of sale or hire also.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, Australian automotive media - presumably writing under the “brand shield effect” - downplay the seriousness of complaints made to the Ad Standards panel. In one example, one outlet denigrated complainants as “nannies” and dismissed the subjects of complaints regarding environmental damage of vehicles as “insignificant indiscretions.”⁴⁸

⁴²<https://verbiedfossielereclame.nl/only-words/>

⁴³<https://banfossilfuelads.org/>

⁴⁴<https://www.newweather.org/2023/05/14/new-legal-advice-supports-councils-taking-action-to-ban-polluter-ads/>

⁴⁵<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/macron-bans-adverts-for-fossil-fuels-kf9335g6s>

⁴⁶https://www-legifrance-gouv-fr.translate.goog/codes/id/LEGISCTA000043959732?_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en-US&_x_tr_pto=wapp

⁴⁷https://www-legifrance-gouv-fr.translate.goog/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000043959740?_x_tr_sl=auto&_x_tr_tl=en&_x_tr_hl=en-US&_x_tr_pto=wapp

⁴⁸<https://www.carexpert.com.au/car-news/ram-1500-trx-ad-nixed-by-advertising-nannies>

**...the advertising
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Solutions

The omnipresence of advertising in our lives is undeniable. It shapes our perception of what constitutes a ‘good life,’ thereby encouraging us to buy products. Advertising is particularly damaging when it comes to high-carbon products such as SUVs and 4X4s, which make not insignificant contributions to climate change.

The call for a ban on advertising these vehicles is not just about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but also about challenging the societal norms that these advertisements perpetuate.

But perhaps most importantly, the call for a ban on advertising gas-guzzlers is about truth in advertising.

SUVs and 4X4s are often marketed as symbols of power, freedom, and adventure. Advertisements for these vehicles typically depict them in rugged, natural settings, reinforcing the idea that owning such a vehicle is synonymous with an adventurous, outdoor lifestyle.

But the reality is that these vehicles are causing damage to the very environments they are depicted in. Their high carbon emissions contribute significantly to climate change, a fact that is conveniently omitted from advertising campaigns.

Moreover, the advertising of these vehicles normalises and glamorises a lifestyle that is fundamentally unsustainable. Examples given in this paper promote fossil fuel consumption at odds with the urgent need to reduce our transport-related carbon emissions.

By advertising SUVs and 4X4s in this way, carmakers are misleading consumers about the environmental impact of these vehicles, and perpetuating harmful societal norms and values.

Locally, some councils are already making moves to stop pouring ratepayer dollars into fossil fuel ads on public infrastructure. For example, the City of Sydney in August 2022 voted to refuse sponsorships funded by fossil fuel interests whose main business is the extraction or sale of coal, oil and gas.⁴⁹

A ban on advertising SUVs and 4X4s at a national level would bring Australia in line with overseas markets, and pave the way for a shift in societal attitudes towards more sustainable lifestyles.

⁴⁹<https://www.adnews.com.au/news/city-of-sydney-votes-to-end-fossil-fuel-advertising>

041

The Australian government must act swiftly to curb the advertising of gas guzzlers.

Closing Summary

The alarming rise in popularity of gas-guzzling SUVs and 4X4s in Australia, fueled by unchecked advertising and lack of consumer awareness, is a ticking carbon time bomb.

The Fossil Ad Ban campaign by Comms Declare is just the first step towards legislating greenhouse pollution labels on consumer goods and services.

It's high time for Australia to implement stringent laws restricting the advertising of high-emission vehicles, akin to overseas practices.

The automotive industry's paradoxical strategy of funding the transition to electric vehicles with profits from gas guzzlers is not only counterproductive but also environmentally destructive.

The Australian government must act swiftly to curb the advertising of gas guzzlers, mandate transparency in emissions intensity, and promote the adoption of electric vehicles.

042

Thank you.

From everyone at Comms Declare, thank you for your attention. If you have any requests or suggestions, please do not hesitate to email hello@commsdeclare.org



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