

Toyota South Africa axes hybrid pioneer from its model range

By [Ryan Bubear](#)

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Despite fielding a local line-up with more hybrid options than ever before (including a raft of dual-powered Lexus models), Toyota South Africa Motors (TSAM) has discontinued the vehicle that started it all. Yes, the Prius has quietly exited South Africa after 17 years on the market.



Since the original Prius – billed as the world’s first mass-production hybrid passenger vehicle at its launch in Japan in 1997 – wasn’t officially offered here in South Africa, the second-generation model marked the nameplate’s local debut way back in 2005.

The third generation touched down in 2009, with the fourth iteration following in mid-2016. A facelifted version was launched in South Africa in 2019 before yet more updates (including a generous addition of safety equipment) were rolled out two years later. The last list price we saw for the slow-selling Prius was R604,100.

Of course, in South Africa, this hybrid didn’t ever achieve the level of popularity it enjoyed in markets such as North America, where the original resonated particularly strongly with Hollywood stars keen to display their “green” credentials (a phenomenon that, in turn, influenced many an ordinary buyer in that country).

We sorted through sales figures submitted to Naamsa for the first eight months of 2022 and discovered just 11 units of the

Prius were registered in South Africa over that period.

While it's not clear whether there is any remaining stock in TSAM's dealer network, the Japanese brand's local division has confirmed to [Cars.co.za](https://www.cars.co.za) that the Prius is no longer being imported.

The Toyota Prius: the outgoing model's powertrain details



As a reminder, the latest XW50-generation Prius drew its urge from a hybrid powertrain comprising an electric motor, a battery pack and a 1.8l, four-cylinder Atkinson-cycle petrol engine.

Total system output stood at 90kW, while Toyota opted not to list a combined maximum torque figure (though the petrol mill made 142Nm and the electric motor generated 163Nm).

Drive was directed to the front axle through a continuously variable transmission.

Thanks to a dedicated EV mode enabling the Prius to operate under full-electric power, Toyota was able to claim a combined fuel economy figure of just 3.7ls per 100km, translating to a theoretical 1,162km range from the 43l fuel tank.

As a self-charging hybrid, the Prius had the ability to recuperate what would otherwise have been wasted energy during deceleration (including braking), storing it in the battery for later use. In addition, the petrol engine was capable of directly charging the battery pack in the absence of regenerative braking.

Though TSAM has called time on the Prius, it still markets a range of hybrid vehicles locally, including the Prospec-ton-produced Corolla Cross hybrid as well as dual-powered versions of the Corolla sedan and Rav.

From what we understand, more hybrid options are on the horizon, too. The local Lexus line-up, meanwhile, includes hybrid versions of the UX, ES, NX, IS, RX and LS.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Having written about everything from sport to politics and crime, Ryan eventually settled on motoring. For the past 12 years, he's been penning articles - both online and in print - about the broader automotive industry, though he's particularly fascinated by vehicle sales statistics. Currently a freelance writer and editor, Ryan is itching to slide (okay, squeeze) in behind the wheel of his soon-to-be-restored 1971 Austin Mini Mk3.

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