



CASE STUDY:

Explosive Detector Dog Unit (EDDU) Vehicle Replacement Program

New Zealand's Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) protects major airports across Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch, Queenstown, Invercargill and Dunedin. Its **Explosive Detector Dog Unit (EDDU)** utilises **45** vehicles to support handlers and dogs, who ensure the safety of passengers, participants and airports.

Much of the fleet was comprised of older model vehicles – either discontinued or no longer suitable for their intended purpose. These ageing vehicles posed safety, emissions, and functionality issues.

To modernise the fleet and support government decarbonisation goals, the Authority sought a partner who understood the operational demands of airport environments and public-sector procurement frameworks.

THE CHALLENGE

The EDDU's vehicles faced mounting mechanical issues, limited replacement options, and rising maintenance costs. Vehicle design created safety risks – existing utes were too high for dogs to enter or exit safely, while sedans lacked space and ergonomic design for handlers constantly in and out whilst wearing operational gear.

Lack of fleet standardisation also affected the unit's professional image, with mixed colours and inconsistent branding across airports. Health and safety issues, such as noise, temperature control, and driver ergonomics, further compounded operational strain.

Budget constraints after COVID-19 made capital purchases impractical, while sustainability mandates required a shift toward low-emission vehicles. The Authority needed a compliant, cost-effective, and purpose built leasing solution.



SOLUTION

The Authority partnered with Custom Fleet to design a fit-for-purpose leasing and fit-out program, delivered in partnership with Wade Group and Hyundai New Zealand.

Through Custom Fleet, the Authority accessed the NZ All of Government Fleet Services panel, enabling an operational leasing model that met compliance and value-for-money requirements. This approach provided immediate financial flexibility and eliminated large capital costs.

Wade Group developed custom-built vehicles tailored to the needs of handlers and for the benefit of animal welfare. Each included:

- Dual dog pods with improved ventilation, lighting and hygiene
- Sealed partitions to reduce noise and odour
- Temperature monitoring and alerts via Custom Fleet telematics
- Vehicle height selected for safer dog access.

The fleet presentation was also transformed. Standardised reflective livery, enhanced lighting, and clear roof markings improved visibility and professional presence. Each vehicle was delivered as a complete turnkey unit, ready for deployment.

RESULTS

The partnership delivered a safer, more sustainable, and professional fleet for the CAA.

Key outcomes:

- **Improved safety and welfare:**
Better ergonomics, safer access, and temperature-controlled pods reduced risk for handlers and dogs.
- **Operational readiness:**
Vehicles arrived fully fitted and ready for immediate use.
- **Financial efficiency:**
Operational leasing freed up capital and enabled fleet scalability.
- **Sustainability progress:**
Hybrid models are expected to cut fleet emissions by in the region of 40%, paving the way for future electrification.
- **Sustainable design:**
Utilising smart design solutions and technology to reduce waste at the start and end of pod life.
- **Professional image:**
Consistent branding and modern design enhanced visibility and public confidence.



Customer perspective

“Our collaboration with Custom Fleet has significantly enhanced our capacity to provide a modern, professional, and safe fleet for our people and their canine partners.”

Lance McGhie