

# 4WD BUYERS GUIDE

## TOYOTA LANDCRUISER 76 SERIES

### MEDIUM WAGONS



**The development of the 76 wagon seemed odd to us at first, because we thought it would surely overlap with the base-model 200 on its release, but Toyota in 2007 didn't have a base-model 200.**

Launched in March 2007 the LandCruiser 76 Series is essentially a smaller Troop Carrier. Its bodywork is old: the front of the LandCruiser 76 wagon is new metal, but it fits into bodywork that dates back to the Bundera 70 Series two-door wagon. This shortie evolved into the four-door LandCruiser II, or 'Prado' as it was called in some markets, and was never officially sold here. There are a few 'grey' imports of these four-doors Down Under; mostly with four-cylinder turbo-diesel power.

Beneath the cobbled-together, box-shaped body the 70 Series DNA stream continues with live front and rear axles, box-section, ladder-frame chassis and the coil-front, leaf-rear suspension introduced with the first 78/79 Series in 1999. When launched, that time warp extended inside the 76 wagon, where the dashboard and controls had changed little in the past 20 years. The CD/radio was MP3 compatible, but sound quality was in the AWA Diamond Dot era.

A positive was the metal dash into which it's very easy to screw brackets for bush essentials such as GPS units, sat-phones and radios. There was cloth-covered seating for five and a choice of vinyl (Workmate) or carpet (GXL) floor covering.

In 2010 Toyota fitted driver and passenger SRS airbags to the entire 70 Series range. The airbag package included telescopic steering column adjustment and a new four-spoke urethane steering wheel.

The audio system was completely revised and the LandCruiser 76 picked up a double-DIN head unit with AM/FM tuner, single CD with MP3 capability, USB input that also allowed iPod control and a 3.5mm audio input jack. It also offered Bluetooth hands-free phone capability and audio streaming with compatible products.

The dashboard was improved with a face-lifted appearance, revised instrument cluster and the addition of a bottle holder next to the gear-shift lever. However, air conditioning remained an option. Under the Toyota's intercooler bonnet bulge sits a 4.5-litre V8 diesel, matched to a strengthened version of the 78/79 transmission.

The big Toyota donk has lazy output of 151kW at 3200-3400rpm and 430Nm on tap from way down at 1200rpm, up to 3200rpm. The engine is capable of at least 50 percent more power and torque, but has been detuned for the 70 Series, in view of its working-vehicle vocation and in deference to the torque limits of the driveline and the definitely non-sporting nature of the running gear.

The LandCruiser 76 has remote central locking, power windows and bucket front seats in GXL, or an awful bucket, plus 1.5-seat bench in the Workmate.

Aircon is a \$2640 option.

The GXL 76 has aluminium wheels with tubeless tyres, but the Workmate has split rims with tubed 7.50R16s.

The LandCruiser has a part-time 4x4 system, with manually lockable front hubs and a rear limited-slip differential, but can be fitted ex-factory with optional (\$2735) front and rear differential locks.


Unlike the longer-wheelbase Troop Carrier the 76 has only a single 90-litre capacity fuel tank.

The 76 Series is rated to haul a 3500kg braked trailer.



At launch the Toyota LandCruiser 76 Workmate Wagon had a recommended retail price of \$53,990 and the GXL Wagon was priced at \$57,490. Add aircon and diff locks and the Workmate climbs to \$59,365, with the GXL at a heady \$62,865.

## On and Off Road

The LandCruiser 76 GXL's driver's seat is reasonably supportive and OK for long-distance cruising. Switches and controls are much the same as they were 20 years ago, along the lines of, 'if it ain't broke, why fix it?'.  


The 76 Series could certainly do with a taller overdrive than the 0.881:1 it has, because the big V8 doesn't need 2300rpm to maintain legal cruising speed. A six-speed transmission is long overdue.

The LandCruiser has different-height front and rear roll centres, fixed-rate front coil springs and variable-rate leaf rears, plus a 95mm difference in front and rear axle track, so its handling can become quirky on bumpy surfaces.

However, the 265/70R16s on the GXL provide much better ride and handling than the skinny 7.50R16s on the Workmate.

The 'Cruiser has ample engine torque at low revs and an 'idle-up' button that raises idle revs to 1200rpm. With that engaged it will 'walk' up a 25-degree, rutted slope without any accelerator input at all.

Economy depends very much on driving style, load, speed and location, but our testing of different 76s has shown that in mixed-cycle on and off road use the 76 will use 12-16L/100km.

## What Goes Wrong

Most of the 76 Series components are proved, so there's good service knowledge in the marketplace.

The single-turbo V8 engine doesn't suffer from oil consumption issues to the same extent as the twin-turbo version in the 200 Series, but owners need to keep an eye on the dipstick level, just in case. An engine that hasn't been using oil can suddenly demand several litres.

If a 76 is driven through deep creeks water can collect in the engine vee and cause corrosion.

## Previous Models

No previous 76 Series, but check out used Troop Carriers.

## Bush Modifications

There's a host of after-market gear for the 78/79 Series and most of that kit will fit the 76 Series.

Bush essentials are an after-market long-range fuel tank and after-market diff locks if the factory ones aren't fitted (they cannot be retro-fitted).

The rear leaves don't like heavy loads and need replacing if much bush equipment is going aboard, or heavy ball weights. Many bush-prepared 76s will score 50mm lift kits, which improve off-road clearance markedly.



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