

# NEW CONTENDER IN THE 4WD MARKET

## FOTON 4WD UTE

Sydney-based automotive distributor, WMC Group has secured the rights to distribute the range of 4x2 and 4x4 utility vehicles with plans for the first vehicles to go on sale in Australia early in 2012. Foton will build the ute in an entirely new state of the art plant near Beijing.



Australian Design Rule testing and compliance are currently underway and are due to be finalised in the next two months.

The Foton utes will be powered by a Cummins ISF 2.8 litre Euro 5 common-rail turbo-diesel or a Foton-manufactured 2.4-litre petrol engine, coupled to a Getrag five-speed manual or ZF six speed automatic. In Euro 5 specification the Cummins diesel delivers up to 120kW of power and 380Nm of torque.

Initial production will be the dual-cab, diesel manual-transmission model, with the auto expected some months afterwards. No plans have been announced for 4WD single or extra-cab models, but these will be available in 4x2 configuration.

According to managing director of WMC, Jason Pecotic, the new Foton ute has been designed for North American and Western markets rather than for domestic Chinese sales and has been benchmarked against the best Japanese rival models.

"Foton will be delivering a sedan-style interior in a wide-body configuration, boasting a full one-tonne payload capacity and three-tonne towing capacity, with power from Cummins, one of the world's most experienced producers of diesel engines," Mr. Pecotic said.

"Apart from those impressive specs the new Foton will be priced at a level that will be between 15 and 20 percent less than comparable models from Japanese manufacturers," he added.

WMC expects an ANCAP rating of at least four-star with the new Foton ute boasting ABS+EBD along with dual front airbags.

Exterior dimensions position the Foton ute dual-cab competitively against the opposition, with an overall length of 5310mm, width of 1880mm and height of 1810mm, with ground clearance of 220mm. WMC says these dimensions make the Foton 180mm longer, 120mm wider and the same height as the HiLux similar spec' model, with 10mm additional ground clearance.

A dealer network has already been established to handle sales of the Foton ute range, with representation planned across the country in major rural and regional centres as well as metro markets.

WMC Group imports Higer coaches and JAC trucks from China.