

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SHOW REPORT

The AIMS ran in Melbourne in early July 2011 and was the scene for some new 4WD offerings. Here's our summary.

New Ford Ranger and Mazda BT-50



Ford and Ford-owned Mazda have collaborated for years on ute production in Thailand and this pattern is set to continue. Both brands previewed their new utes at AIMS. Ford supplied plenty of technical info, but Mazda is still a bit shy on details.

The Ford Ranger will be available with a choice of two common-rail Ford Duratorq TDCi diesels and new six-speed manual and automatic transmissions. The 2.2-litre four-cylinder diesel delivers peak torque of 375Nm and power of 110kW and the 3.2-litre, five-cylinder diesel produces 147kW with 470Nm of torque. However, fuel tank capacity remains at only 80 litres.

The Ranger auto features Adaptive Automatic Mode that adapts gear shifts according to driving style and Grade Control Logic that activates downshifts when driving downhill and the brake pedal is depressed.

Making full use of the spacious new interior, the Ranger Double Cab offers multiple storage spaces in the cabin, including a deep centre console bin that has an air-conditioner duct in some models.

The glove box is large enough to accommodate a 16-inch laptop computer and door pockets can fit 1.5-litre water bottles. Underneath the rear seats on the Super Cab models is an easily be accessed storage area.



All models feature Bluetooth, USB and iPod connectivity. Air-conditioning is standard and dual-zone climate control and reversing sensors are available on the XLT.

The range-topping Wildtrak offers a five-inch colour screen with satellite navigation.

Driveline components are mounted above the frame rail so that the transfer case and engine sump are protected by strong cross members.

Electrical components and air inlets are strategically placed high in the engine compartment, so wading capability can be 800 mm.

Hill Launch and Hill Descent Control are standard and some models have an electric rear diff lock option. Dynamic Stability Control (DSC) with Adaptive Load Control applies brake inputs and engine torque reduction to control wheel slip as well as mitigating over- or under-steer reactions in slippery conditions or when the driver makes sudden lane changes to avoid an accident. Trailer Sway Control system monitors the behaviour of the tow vehicle and trailer to sense the trailer sway and applies braking countermeasures to reduce its effects.

Mazda BT-50 Freestyle announced

The BT-50 Freestyle Cab offers a combination of seating for four and an exceptionally wide, 1408mm pillar-less door opening, with rear-seat cushions that have been lengthened by 50mm for better thigh support and more stable fitment of child seats, while the seatback height has been increased by 128mm.



The rear seat cushions can be removed to create interior cargo space.

The cargo tub has increased in width, length and height resulting in an overall cargo volume of 1453 litres - an increase of 266 litres over the equivalent current model.



Holden's 2012 Colorado

Holden previewed its all-new Colorado 4WD range at the [Australian International Motor Show](#). The five-seat crew-cab was styled in Holden's Port Melbourne Design Studio and will be produced at a dedicated factory in Thailand.



Mechanical details on the new Colorado are sketchy at this stage, but a 2.8-litre turbo-diesel four is scheduled along with undisclosed engine choices.



New Volkswagen Touareg for the well-heeled traveller

The latest Touareg offers much-needed interior space increases, new V6 diesels and an eight-speed auto box, but unfortunately, all this tech comes at a high price. A 2011/12 Touareg with low-range gearing and variable-height air suspension will set you back a cool ninety grand and there's much better 4WD wagon value for money than that in the market place.

Lightweight construction techniques, more fuel-efficient engines and new technologies are all good news and, while the new model is 144 millimetres longer overall with a 50mm longer wheelbase, weight is slightly less.

A choice of sophisticated new options is also available including an advanced Driver Assistance Package which incorporates a range of features such as Lane Assist, Side Assist and ProActive Occupant Protection System.



All new Touaregs will feature BlueMotion Technologies including brake energy recuperation and Start/Stop functions.

Standard equipment across the range – nine airbags, ABS, EBD, Brake Assist, Auto Hold and Hill Hold Assist, ASR, EDL and ESP with active rollover protection function, EBC and Off-road Function with Anti-lock Braking System (ABSplus) and Hill Decent Assist. Entertainment and technology equipment fitted as standard includes coloured Multi-function Display and Bluetooth® connectivity.

The 3.0 litre V6 TDI engine is available in two power outputs, but the figures for the low-range-gear model are 176kW and 550Nm from 2000rpm.