

## MERCEDES-BENZ

Re-relaunches the Geländewagen – *at a price!*



**Mercedes-Benz Australia hasn't had a lot of success selling off-road vehicles to the public, despite the company's amazing history of selling military 4WD and 6WD machines to our military forces.**

The boxy G-wagen was launched 30 years ago in Europe and was sold to several military customers around the world. It was released in civilian form in Australia 20 years ago and was only mildly successful; mainly because it was grossly underpowered by a five-cylinder, three-litre, naturally aspirated diesel. Turbo variants were available overseas, but not in right hand drive markets, because the steering column would have had to punch through the turbo!

MBA had another go, offering petrol powered versions a few years later, but they didn't sell very well either.

Now that the Australian Army is taking delivery of G-wagens to replace the aged Land Rover fleet, MBA is making a third effort to flog the G-wagen to Aussie 4WD enthusiasts and our prediction is that this initiative will be about as successful as MBA's previous efforts.

It's not that there's anything wrong with the vehicle: it's the price tag.

Two 2011 Australian G-wagen models are planned: both being long wheelbase station wagons in five-seat configuration. The G 350 BlueTEC has a RRP of \$159,900 and the G 55 AMG is a staggering \$214,900.

The latest G-wagen retains live axles and coil springs, but scores traction and stability control and inter-axle and across-axle differential locks.

The G350 is powered by M-B's three-litre, aluminium-block V6 diesel, with outputs of 155kW at 3400rpm and 540Nm of torque in the 1600-2400rpm band. It features BlueTEC (urea injection) technology to reduce NOx emissions by up to 80 percent and drives through M-B's seven-speed auto transmission.

The AMG version's 5.5-litre, supercharged V8 petrol engine is rated at 373kW and 700Nm, driving through a truck-sized five-speed auto box.



I drove an AMG V8 G-wagen in Europe a few years ago and couldn't really see the point of a brick-shaped vehicle trying to emulate streamlined Autobahn tourers. It drank prodigious amounts of fuel in the process.