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Mahindra Picks up

INDIAN auto giant, Mahindra, has released its on-farm diesel Pik-Up here after testing by local farmers.

Built for rugged Australian conditions, the Pik-Ups were put through a series of trials by 20 rural landholders in the Central West over two months, with Mahindra rating the results as "outstanding".

After being treated like any other farm vehicle, feedback showed satisfaction with power, fuel economy, speed and visibility, the company said.

The vehicle has both two-wheel and four-wheel drive versions with a single or double cab, and is built for blue collar work, primarily by farmers and tradespeople.

The trial in Australia comes as Mahindra returns to Australian shores after more than a decade.

The first Pik-Ups, plucked straight from the Indian factory floor, couldn't handle Australian conditions, but this time the company has returned with a vehicle designed for – and tested in – Australia.

Mahindra is open about its previous failings in Australia, and says this time it's done the necessary research.

The four-cylinder Pik-Up is, as yet, not available in India.

By HENRY HOSKINS

Basic features, such as plenty of headroom in the cab – so farmers can keep their Akubras or whatever hats on – are a feature, but the main focus is on providing a tough and reliable vehicle.

The turbo diesel engine produces 79 kilowatts of power at 3800 revolutions per minute and 247 Newton metres from 1800 to 2200 rpm.

The payload varies from 1000 to 1160 kilograms, and the ute has a large tray.

The tray on the single cab comes with dimensions of 2294 millimetres by 1520mm by 550mm, which is slightly larger than that for the dual cab at 1498mm by 1520mm by 550mm.

Built for work, the Pik-Up mightn't drive as smoothly on the road as some of its competitors, but its price more than compensates for that.

Ranging from \$23,990 to \$26,990 (recommended retail price including GST), the Pik-Up offers great value, although Mahindra and importer, TMI Pacific, an arm of Sydney's Tynan Motor Group, insist they aren't cheap vehicles.

"Reliability is the most important

thing – you don't want to break down on a 15,000-hectare property in the middle of nowhere," TMI Pacific chief operations officer, Claire Tynan, said.

"The cars are value packed."

Roll-out of the vehicles began in Sydney on June 6, and they are now available from 11 NSW dealers, with a Queensland opening set for July 27.

"We don't want to rush our foundation steps, we want to make sure everything is correct," Ms Tynan said.

"This means making sure it can be properly serviced, for example."

After the Queensland release, Mahindra and TMI Pacific will expand into Victoria, before spreading to 60 dealers across the country.

Chairman of the TMI Pacific and the Tynan Motor Group, Michael Tynan, expects to sell 600 units in the first year.

"We feel the vehicle will strongly appeal to rural consumers and tradesmen, however, its large tray, price and cabin size, especially in the four door, will also appeal to sportspeople and families," he said.

The Mahindra Group, worth \$US4.5 billion and among the top 10 industrial houses in India, is the world's fourth largest tractor manufacturer.



ABOVE and RIGHT: Mahindra's diesel Pik-Up, built for Australian conditions, has a payload of 1000 to 1160 kilograms.