

LANDCRUISER 200 SERIES

The 200 Series 'Cruiser boasts the same D-4D engine that you will find in the 76 Series, except that you'll notice that it has twice as many turbochargers. That's right... This stonking V8 diesel is twin turbocharged and produces a massive 650Nm of stump-pulling torque.

At the push of a button, eight cylinders spring into life and you soon get the feeling this vehicle is like no other LandCruiser that has ever been built before. But every 4WDer knows that it's going to take more than sheer power to get this 4WD through five diff-crunching

terrains and back again. We weren't testing how fast we could drive, we were testing performance in each terrain and overall suitability as an Aussie tourer - or else the 200 Series would have won hands down.

The suspension in the 200 Series and the hydraulic swaybar technology made this vehicle feel at home on the fast and torturous Outback roads. It gives you great confidence when a large vehicle can steer, handle and brake with ease, no matter what road you're driving on.

Sure, the 2720kg of motor vehicle doesn't handle like a

rally car, and when you hit a rough patch on the track, the vehicle tends to react by sending a slight shimmer in the steering, rather than engage traction control and set things straight. Nothing to set alarm bells off, but just enough to remind you there's no auto pilot.

If all hell breaks loose in the pilot's seat, stopping is made easy (even on Outback roads) via beefy ventilated disc brakes at each wheel with a loose traction-calibrated ABS, giving you great confidence in this vehicle.

Apart from handling well on fast untamed tracks, the 'Cruiser proves to be a tough workhorse in the tough stuff. The plastic bumpers and alloy side steps do their best to hinder the 200 Series when the going gets really tough, and if you fancy them, it's best not to take this vehicle where it's more than capable of going. The good news is that approach and departure angles can easily be improved with barwork at both ends. This held the Toyota back on a few of the tougher rocky sections and in the deep snow.

