



Mercedes-Benz Diesels.

The television commercial featuring a very old and black car on the Mercedes-Benz test track was enough to move many Australians to the realisation that the word "diesel" was not a recent invention.

What that commercial said to them was that Mercedes-Benz had been designing and producing diesel cars for over forty years. The idea of diesel as an alternative fuel was not just a product of the insecurity produced by the fuel shortages and price rises of the late seventies, after all.

So why diesel?

A Mercedes-Benz diesel is probably the least fussy, most fuel efficient power plant ever specified for a motor vehicle. It uses indirect fuel injection. There are no emission controls. There is no electrical system as we know it—spark plugs, distributor, points, coil. It uses less fuel, and what fuel it uses, burns more efficiently, to the point that it may consume seventy-five percent less fuel at idle than a petrol engine equivalent.

And, more importantly, a Mercedes-Benz diesel lasts.

And lasts.

Mercedes-Benz introduced the first diesel production car in 1936. It was code-named the 260D. In 1949, the Type 170D was introduced, followed by the Type 170DA, and in 1950 the Type 170DS and 170SD.

In 1953 came the Type 180D, with 1.7 litre engine, of which more than 159,000 were produced in ten years. In 1958 came the 190D, and then a lull.

Ten years later came the new generation of Mercedes-Benz diesels—the 200D and 220D. Three years later came the one-millionth diesel



from Mercedes-Benz.

Then came the remarkable Mercedes-Benz C111 Diesel experimental car. This car has held twelve world speed records and twenty seven international records, all confirmed by the F.I.A. Top speed is over 325 kph (203 mph), highest average speed is 321.8 kph (201.1 mph) over distances from 100 km to 10,000 miles. Several of those records were previously held by petrol cars. The C111 was fitted with a five-cylinder, three litre Diesel engine basically the same as the 300D saloons (but with exhaust gas turbochargers and charge-air cooling).

In sixty-four hours of flat-out driving the diesel averaged 19.8 litre/100 kilometres, or 14.3 mpg. That alone was enough to convince the

company that there was a diesel in our future, as well as in our past.

Diesel fuel is a natural by-product of petrol, from the crude oil brought from the ground, so the ratio cannot change markedly. Diesel-powered cars, however, are important to many people, particularly those who are concerned about consistency of supply.

However, for Australia, particularly, the diesel-engined car has special appeal. With our vast spaces, yet a ready availability of diesel fuel, and with the propensity of Mercedes-Benz cars to cover long distances at high speeds with good fuel consumption, the diesel-engined Mercedes-Benz comes into its own.