

SAX 4-9-10

Taking luxury to great lengths

Mark Hinchliffe

THEY are the ultimate in go-anywhere motorhomes and now they've been made more luxurious.

EarthCruiser Overland Vehicles (EOV) of Brisbane has introduced a longer wheelbase version of the macho Mitsubishi Canter-based EarthCruiser.

EOV boss Lance Gillies says lengthening the wheelbase by 600mm has allowed them to add more creature comforts such as a queen-size bed, suspended front seats, a bigger living area and 15 per cent more storage space.

The price has jumped from \$195,000 to \$230,000.

Depending on

what you load it with, you may need a small truck licence, rather than just a car licence.

"There was a call for it from our customers," Gillies says. "We have explorers who are happy with the short wheelbase, but some people wanted more storage and space."

Since its introduction last August, seven EarthCruisers have been sold. Original designer Kym Bolton is driving one in China.

"They're scattered all around the

world. One is in Tibet, another in the middle of Australia and others leaving for world trips next year."

Gillies says. "Our customers come from all over the place. They're adventurous people. Their ages

vary from 40 to 60 and they are all couples."

Gillies admits the longer wheelbase has reduced the ramperover angle.

"But only slightly. Its offroad ability is still incredible. And you can still fit it inside a container to ship it overseas."

To accommodate the longer wheelbase and extra weight, the springs have been lengthened and suspension tuned.

"It rides very European. There is no truck feeling about it.

Because we are seen as a manufacturer in Australia,

they are registered as EarthCruiser not as a Canter 4WD, which makes a big difference to our customers."

It comes in white, but other colours can usually be supplied. "I had one guy talk about zebra stripes tongue-in-cheek. At least I hope it was tongue-in-cheek, because he's not getting it," Gillies says.

The mid-wheelbase EarthCruiser has a 4.9-litre, intercooled turbo-diesel engine with 117kW of power and 471Nm of torque married to a five-speed gearbox with two-speed transfer case. The rear axle has a Thornton Power-Lock Differential for positive rear traction.

Suspension is tuned for hard roads with a soft ride and tyres are military specification 36-inch Michelin XZL super singles for harsh terrain.

The rear protection bar incorporates a 3500kg tow bar and tyre carrier.

The interior has moulded cabinets, large windows, shower, toilet, kitchen and a queen bed. It has solar panels, diesel water/air heater and cockpit.

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