

1971-74 HQ Statesman



Among the many 40th birthdays being celebrated this year is arguably the most significant one to the local car manufacturing industry - the 1971 release of the first long wheelbase luxury Holden derivative, the Statesman. The original Statesman's ancestors are, today, an Australian automotive export success story. As Joe Kenright reveals, that all started with the trendsetting Custom/de Ville. It also played a part in making low volume Australian muscle cars viable.

Story: Joe Kenwright
 Pics: Coventry Studios



Custom/de Ville



At a Stretch

The launch of Ford's ZA Fairlane in 1967 was not the revolution it was hyped-up to be at the time. It merely marked a gradual return to the two-tiered Australian family car market that was at its best during 1955 and 1956. Families could choose between a Holden and its local rivals at entry level or move up to the latest 115 inch/2921mm wheelbase US models assembled locally for those who needed the extra space and cruising ability.

Despite the ZA Fairlane's 116 inch/2946mm wheelbase on paper, its XR Falcon roofline pushed most of the extra space into the boot. Australians with full-sized rear passengers still had to find the cash for the big US models that had become too big for many.

The HQ Statesman in 1971 was the first to offer a real choice between a standard family car and a local long wheelbase luxury car. It was the first where the extra wheelbase went into both the cabin and the boot. It was also the first of its type not derived from any overseas model.

As Ford and Chrysler quickly followed with comparable long wheelbase models also unique to Australia, locally assembled US models from all three manufacturers quickly became redundant.

All local long wheelbase models remain of special interest when their top-shelf specifications and premium engine options helped keep low volume Australian muscle cars alive and viable. They also delivered a sequence of stylish and desirable models, all of which have their own following today.

The HQ Statesman is especially noteworthy when it is the first of a model series that still survives in today's market, even if the Statesman badge was dropped late in 2010. It has not only outlived the US Chevrolet and Pontiac models that it replaced in 1971, it now wears Chevrolet's upper level Caprice badge and keeps its heritage alive in export markets.

Australia and the 1956 Olympics

It is hard to nominate another western country outside the US that had such modern cars on offer at the time of the 1956 Olympics, even if there were plenty of old timers still on the road. The new FE Holden and Ford Zephyr Mark II were bang up to the minute with their curved glass, unitary construction and powerful six cylinder engines. The milestone final Ford Customline series, with its new overhead valve V8, and Chevrolet's legendary 1955-56 series, with its dependable overhead valve six, defined a roomy big country-cruiser class that was neither six nor V8, a trend that later Australian LWB models would revive. Chrysler's dated Dodge-Plymouth-DeSoto local trio based on an obsolete side-valve Plymouth met a niche in between. It wasn't until 1972 before Australians were again offered such wide choices. So why did such choices so fundamental to Australian needs disappear then re-emerge?

Main and left: The Holden name is conspicuous by its absence, on the car's exterior at least. Many enthusiasts insist it was a GM Statesman. Holden applied no less than 11 Caddy garlands around the Statesman reflecting its top-shelf aspirations.



The Rise and Fall of the HQ Statesman

- ❖ **1957-58:** Current US cars grow too big and wide for Australia's single-lane rural roads and narrow dual-lane blacktop with their unmade edges. Ford is forced to keep versions of its 1955 US 115 inch/2921mm models alive until 1959. Chrysler reskins its 1953 Plymouth as the Royal, while modest Chevrolet size increases allow Holden to maintain parity with the US.
- ❖ **1959-61:** All US manufacturers boost wheelbases to 118 inch/2997mm or more forcing local manufacturers to switch to US models unsuited to Australia. Chrysler keeps the local 115 inch/2921mm Royal alive as a side-valve six and V8, below its current US models. Withdrawal of other 115 inch/2921mm models prompts local assembly of Studebaker Lark and Rambler to fill the gap. Ford drops obsolete full-size 1959 Fairlane in 1961, its last full-size US model until 1964.
- ❖ **1962-65:** Ford and Holden assemble larger Zephyr and Vauxhall Cresta to partially fill the gap. Vauxhalls join local US models in premium dealer chain. Ford assembles new compact Fairlane with same wheelbase as 1956 Customline for an instant hit only to end compact Fairlane assembly as Chrysler drops the Royal, both in 1964. Ford matches local rivals by reviving full-size US Galaxie locally in 1964. British Ford and Vauxhall models dropped for 1965 as local Fairmont and Premier grow in size and performance. As Ford, Holden and Chrysler maintain local assembly of current US models, all abandon the original 115 inch/2921mm segment. Chrysler breaks ranks in 1965 with the AP6 Valiant V8, Australia's first compact V8 family car. Positioned as a standalone model above Regal, its short 106 inch/2692 wheelbase and standard Valiant looks keep sales low.
- ❖ **1966:** A year after local stocks of the 1964 US Fairlane are cleared, Ford's bigger XR Falcon 500/Fairmont V8 partly fills the gap with its 111 inch/2819mm wheelbase. The VC Valiant V8 now looks bigger but the old 106 inch/2692mm wheelbase stays. As the Studebaker Cruiser, Humber Super Snipe and compact Fairlane exit, Ford planners spot an opportunity.
- ❖ **1967:** Ford adds US Fairlane rear sheet metal (not Galaxie as some still claim) to XR Falcon roof and front for a boost in wheelbase

- to 116 inches/2946mm. Despite minor changes to the rear door aperture to mate with US rear, the ZA Fairlane's rear doors and backseat are still defined by the XR Falcon's roofline for little improvement over a Fairmont. Yet the balanced looks, bigger boot, choice of V8 or six, and duty-free pricing still guarantee immediate Fairlane sales success despite squat-like angles of rear seat. Chrysler releases new VE V8 range rebadged as the top shelf VIP with imposing US Dodge Dart nose but short Valiant rear leaves VIP exposed with 108 inch/2743mm wheelbase, one inch/25.4mm short of old XK Falcon and a full eight inches/203mm short of the ZA Fairlane.
- ❖ **1968:** Defining local industry moment after Holden pitches Brougham against Fairlane then fails dramatically as VE VIP and HK Brougham are both dismissed as pretenders. Holden justifiably suggests that formal HK Premier roofline leaves Brougham with better rear seat comfort than ZB Fairlane but Premier front and 111 inch/2819mm wheelbase mated to clumsy extended boot fools no one. Later HT/HG fake grille extensions below the bumper add little credibility. A chastened Holden has no choice but to lock in a long wheelbase Brougham replacement internally during 1968, yet Chrysler was ready to launch the 1969 VF VIP, its first VIP with an extended wheelbase.
- ❖ **1969:** The VF VIP was a far more extensive local effort than the ZA Fairlane with an extra four inches/101.6mm spliced into the roof and rear floor. This dictated the first locally extended rear doors while the standard padded vinyl roof hid the roof joins. Although it added much needed rear cabin space and comfort over the cramped Valiant, the VIP's 112 inch/2845mm wheelbase was closer to a Kingswood or Falcon than Fairlane. Quad headlights in a standard VF grille and VF rear panels and lights with extra detailing left it looking more Valiant than VIP when the ZC Fairlane could never be mistaken for an XW Falcon.
- ❖ **1970:** Chrysler's unique new front styling for the VG VIP delivers one of the most cohesive local LWB models except large stockpiles of VF VIPs take so long to clear that Chrysler can only build a handful. VG VIP with new Hemi six is Australia's first LWB six with adequate performance.
- ❖ **1971:** The HQ Statesman arrives mid-year with many advances and sets a new benchmark in almost every area on paper (see below).

Although wheelbase is 114 inch/2896mm, its purpose-built long wheelbase design is far more space-efficient. It's closely followed by the credible CH Chrysler sedan and Hardtop with a 115 inch/2921mm wheelbase. The CH sedan's fatter C-pillars allows its rear seats to be moved rearwards while retaining Valiant doors and rear styling. Despite its dramatic new front, the CH Chrysler is judged too similar to the Valiant, an impression encouraged by the Valiant Hardtop on the same wheelbase.

- ❖ **1972:** Dodge Phoenix sales slump and rumours abound that Chrysler was forced to warehouse the last CKD Phoenix kits unassembled. All US models are withdrawn from local market. In February 1972, *Wheels* tests a Cadillac Fleetwood Special Brougham which highlights the close-styling relationship with the Statesman including the separate egg-crate grille, separate headlights, slim windscreen pillars, wheel trims, C-pillars, raised rear quarters and tail lights. Although the Statesman is never mentioned, the link is obvious. The ZF Fairlane arrives with 117 inch/2972mm wheelbase. Large blanks behind rear doors and longer boot point to the same compromises as before. Although rear seat is finally moved rearwards, loss of rear headroom is heavily criticised. Despite growing suggestions that it makes little sense against an XA Fairmont, the ZF Fairlane looks the biggest in a niche where size is everything and retains sales leadership.
- ❖ **1973:** Ford steals a second march on local rivals with the P5 LTD, Australia's first factory limo with full size US 121 inch/3073mm wheelbase. Extended LTD rear doors and spliced-in roof extensions, hidden by padded vinyl roof as for VF/VG VIP, raised rear quarter panels and hidden headlights hide XA Falcon origins and width. Landau Hardtop version shares 111 inch/2819mm Falcon Hardtop wheelbase. Fairlane's ZG facelift and major feature upgrade further distances it from XB Falcon. Leyland P76 makes a pitch for the same buyer by offering a Brougham-matching Executive with a big boot on the standard 111 inch/2819mm wheelbase. As unchanged HQ Statesman sales slide under Ford's three-pronged attack, Holden contacts owners and *Wheels* staffer which leads to a February 1973 re-test of the HQ Statesman with its hidden improvements.



How the HQ Statesman Evolved

The 1971 arrival of the HQ Holden with an equally exciting new Statesman has only been matched in local history by the launch of the VB Commodore and VE Commodore/WM Statesman.

Because the Statesman had to hold its own in former Pontiac, Chevrolet and Vauxhall showrooms, there wasn't a Holden badge anywhere to be seen on the car, in brochures or the handbook. Instead, it carried the first of the blue corporate GM identification. Many insist this makes it a GM Statesman.

For Holden, it was either a Statesman Custom or De Ville, no more, no less. It was a move that backfired on Holden when so many 1971 buyers still believed that Holden was 'Australia's Own'. This was during an era when GM was still a faceless and unloved corporation, and for some, even the enemy of Holden.

Holden applied no less than 11 Cadillac garlands around the Statesman reflecting its top-shelf aspirations yet they always flanked a Holden lion, not a Cadillac crest or any other corporate GM ID.

There has been ongoing speculation that the whole HQ program was an abandoned US model program, delayed while most of it was reworked for Australia. This speculation stems from the fact the HQ Statesman was so little changed after its 1968 internal completion and that the

HK series had to support a second HG facelift for the first time in history.

Those who raise this possibility point to the different parts identification, the commonality of key structural parts that even share bolt holes with certain US Chevrolet models and the fact that the Statesman was the only HQ model that appeared with a US-style painted centre grille division that had earlier featured on all HQ Kingswood, Monaro and Premier proposals. They then point to this centre pillar appearing in the grille of the last-minute HG facelift, which was meant to lead into the HQ.

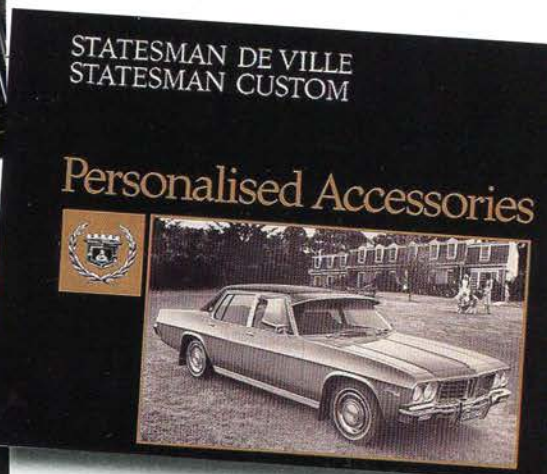
Australian Phil Zmood, who was there from the start as a junior to design chief Joe Schemansky and his assistant John Schinella, is rather more pragmatic. He recalls that this front was reserved and locked-in for what was then the proposed Brougham so it could never be mistaken for a Premier. John Schinella, who was overseeing the HQ, had a strong leaning towards Pontiac and Oldsmobile which had similar centre grille divisions. He favoured this treatment as the US Pontiac was one of the cars the next Brougham would replace. Leo Pruneau, who came in during 1968 to help complete HQ front and rear styling, concurs with this. He recalls that the HQ Statesman (still badged as a Brougham) had been completed before he arrived.

Other HQ models were later given a wide, open grille-look much closer to launch to make them

look wider and more aggressive. Leo notes that the Statesman's two piece grille with body colour division and separate headlight surrounds could make the Statesman look narrower than other HQ models when it needed to look bigger. He then explains that the de Ville egg crate sections were wider than usual to give it a more horizontal aspect in an attempt make the Statesman look more substantial. Mercedes-Benz, Studebaker and even the R-Series Valiant had used block-style grille overlays for a similar prestige effect. It was also a feature of 1971 Chevrolet Caprice and Cadillac grilles. The Custom had the vertical grille divisions blanked out.

After the Australian version was completed, Holden had to design a new Chevrolet grille based on the US Chevelle/Malibu to fit in the stock HQ grille aperture so the HQ range and the Statesman could be marketed as Chevrolets in South Africa. The HQ Statesman is often incorrectly reported as being sold there with an HQ Premier front when, in fact, it shared the same Chevrolet front as other HQ-based Constantia and Kommando models.

Zmood then explains that the vertical tail lights survived with little change, totally separate from the rounded tail and low bumper-mounted tail lights of the HQ sedans. Pruneau recalls that this early tail light design was completed under Joe Schemansky, formerly of Cadillac, and points out that it was a variation of the same Cadillac vertical



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tail light-look that Schemansky exploited to make the HR rear look so distinctive over the HD. Extending these lights into the bumper itself was an attempt to present them in a different setting from the same tail light design on the HQ wagon. Because buyers still had no trouble linking the two, Leo later had to change them for the HJ Statesman. As most wagons have since disappeared, the classy HQ Statesman rear can now be judged in its own right.

Pruneau also points out that a blank between the Statesman's rear screen and boot lid allowed boot lids to be interchangeable with the HQ sedans, an advantage for later facelifts. The raised rear quarter panels and tail lights could then be tweaked to provide a different side profile.

The big step, unmatched prior to HQ, was building the wagon on the same 114inch/2896mm wheelbase. Although the wagon's rear doors were not extended below the glass, they were given an extended, flatter upper section to meet the wagon's long roof.

These new wagon doors allowed the Statesman roof to be extended well beyond other HQ sedans then finished in an almost upright C-pillar, about to become the norm in 1972 US luxury models. This feature, which was a generation ahead of local rivals also minimised blindspots then allowed the rear seat to be moved



much further back than rivals while maintaining a relaxed angle and full headroom. This was why a wheelbase two inches/50.8mm shorter than Fairlane's was never a concern within Holden.

The tall tale 'wings' between the rear seats and door apertures not only highlight how much was gained but also reveal where costs were shaved. Pruneau would have to wait until the WB before he was given the budget to extend the rear doors so they would open level with the rear seat.

Apart from the P5/P6 LTD and the WB Statesman, the same compromise would continue in every Australian long wheelbase model until the arrival of the WM Statesman/Caprice in 2006. Few, if anyone, would have noticed in 1971.

The unusual dark grey of the first HQ Statesman press car, which caused the centre painted section to blend into a single full-width grille, was probably no accident. Local Holden management were not convinced by the HQ Statesman nose and Pruneau was under pressure almost from release to make it look more formal. As the pressure grew to do the same to all standard wheelbase models for the HJ facelift, the HQ Statesman would be the last until the WB series to boast totally different front styling from everyday models.

Holden was under so much pressure after HQ to complete design work for local Gemini, Torana, Kingswood and coming Commodore models, that the resources and budget were never available

The Cadillac Connection

Speculation was rife in 1971 that Holden had to go to the GM president to get permission to use the Cadillac garland or wreath which was even added to the special centre sections attached to the Statesman's HQ hubcaps. It is true that Cadillac wouldn't budge on its refusal even though the badge inside the garland would be different.

A snap visit to Holden by Jim Roache, GM President, changed that. As a former Cadillac chief, Roache was a good mate and former Cadillac colleague of Joe Schemansky, Holden's current design chief. As Roache was climbing the steps of his plane at Essendon Airport (Melbourne's original international airport), Schemansky asked if he could use the garland and was immediately granted personal permission to do so. From that point, ongoing Cadillac co-operation in the detailing of the local Statesman was a given.



for extensive Statesman facelifts. This partly explains why the HQ Statesman, after generating strong sales on its 1971 release, never received the attention it needed from 1973 to keep up with rivals, including a number of Europeans and Japanese vying for the same mid-range prestige dollar. The 'better late than never' 1980 WB series highlighted what needed to be done several facelifts earlier and why Holden then had to wait until the VQ before it could seriously challenge Fairlane's dominance.





Statesman Engineering

Few local cars or imports could match the HQ Statesman's ability to survive the worst roads anywhere in Australia. It was the only local LWB model to have a semi-perimeter frame from the front to the centre pillar which isolated road shock from the body. Its four-link coil-spring rear end had no peer in a local LWB model. All round vision and rough road ride were unmatched. So why did it generate a *Wheels* December 1971 road test that still stands as the most critical review of any local long wheelbase model ever?

It hardly seems possible in 2011 that a company like Holden could conceive a totally new HQ to meet Australia's fast growing preference for European dynamics, styling and space efficiency then allow a visiting US suspension and chassis chief to wind its handling and steering back to 1950s US standards. Under his non-negotiable philosophy to scare Australian drivers into slowing down long before the car lost grip, it defied belief even in 1971.

Australian engineers, more than capable of applying Radial Tuned Suspension improvements



before 1971, found it wasn't worth their career to suggest otherwise.

The Statesman's plusher settings accentuated this, prompting *Wheels* to estimate that Statesman drivers were forced to drive 20-30km/h slower through corners than rivals. The quaint 1940s road straps on the back of early Statesman front seats were not decorative.

Such a handicap undermined the very reason for the model's existence as a

relaxed, point-to-point back roads cruiser.

This scourge would compromise all Holdens for another six years and hand sales to otherwise inferior rivals. Not even a visionary Holden chief could have cut across the separate vertical fiefdoms within Holden and bring HQ dynamics into line with the rest of the car. It only ended after a visiting US team were shocked that Holden could actually sell cars as bad as this and cleared the path for RTS.

The later HZ Statesman RTS, little more than a tweaked HQ, soon proved that the 1971 *Wheels* report was no exaggeration.

As part of this malaise, Holden seemed incapable of fixing the Statesman's sub-standard seats with their incorrect angles and lack of support, poor cushion shape and front frames that squandered the extra wheelbase by preventing rear passengers from sliding their feet under the front seat. (This was never fully addressed until the WB gained German Senator front seat frames). Rear seat belts were so poorly located that few passengers could wear them safely and the finish was woeful.

Following a February 1973 re-test, *Wheels* acknowledged that firmer springs, new seats and



Why the Statesman name?

The new HQ LWB model was badged 'Brougham' almost up to release, a US term for a limousine version. It was no longer applicable to a stand alone range. When it also needed to be distanced from the outgoing HG standard wheelbase model, Holden was open to a new name.

Phil Zmood recalls there was some discussion about Chrysler's use of the US VIP badge and that Holden should consider something similar. The matter was handed over to Val Stacy, a Holden senior manager and mentor to younger staff. As one of the original team who went to the US to develop the first Holden, he was regarded as a keeper of the Holden heritage and kept a large book of future model names. The Statesman badge would have first come from him.

Pruneau concurs that it was a local name, then adds there was a growing awareness of what Opel was doing with senior titles including Admiral, Commodore, Senator, Kapitan and Diplomat. The Astra's small Opel predecessor was the Kadett. The Statesman badge was seen as a good fit above Premier in 1971 and compatible with any developments involving Opel in the future. Today's Holden Commodore and HSV Senator are all that remain globally of these Opel badges.

Max Wilson, Holden's mercurial MD at the time, liked to use US model names and was quick to pick up de Ville after the Cadillac connection was cleared. Custom was already being used locally by Ford and VW as a fancy word for Standard and carried a more positive image of being clean of unnecessary frills.



inertia reel seat belts had made a difference but questioned the extent of suspension changes. It has since been revealed that Sydney Holden staff, away from the watchful eye of head office, were fitting sports suspension to NSW and Queensland press cars after 1972, noting they were "much better accepted"!

Buyers were not fooled which is why the Fairlane went unchallenged for so long. The bottom line was that the long 1980-85 WB model life proved that a 1980s prestige car was in there waiting all along from 1971.





Of the 18,092 HQ Statesman total, just 2700 or less were RPO L30 350 optioned. Good ones that survived rust and a tough rural life were usually cannibalised for their prestige walnut dash and door fittings, front body section and drivetrain during the panel van craze.

Model History

The Custom was offered with the HQ's 202/3.3-litre six with three-speed column manual, four on the floor manual or three-speed Trimatic auto. The 253/4.2 and 308/5.0-litre V8s with Trimatic were optional. Both Aussie V8 Customs were also available as four speed manuals but only with bucket seats and centre-console for a long wheelbase sleeper. The 350/5.7-litre with Turbo-Hydramatic was also a Custom option.

The de Ville came only with a choice of the 308/5.0-litre with Trimatic or 350/5.7-litre with Turbo-Hydramatic.

The 350 engine was designated RPO L30 and only available with the Turbo-Hydramatic 400 automatic transmission (RPO M41) and single exhaust. Rated at 275bhp/205kW in 1971, the real figure was closer to the 250bhp/186kW figure posted for the similar US engine.

The inflated figures remained unchanged even after the late 1973 version lost power and was probably left with no more than the 308's claimed 240bhp/179kW.

According to AMC's Holden expert, Ben Stewart, the HQ's 350 was not the same engine used in the automatic HT/HG GTS 350 but an export engine built for the Australian market to similar specifications by McKinnon Industries in Canada – GM's export arm.

The carburettor used on the 1971 engine was a 7041284 part, the '8' identifying the GM division as Holden, Australia. The 'new' 350 engine introduced in late 1973 had a different carburettor along with many other changes.

The *Wheels* December 1971 test of the de Ville 308 recorded a 0-60mph time of 8.1 seconds and a 16.2 second standing quarter. It was revealed later that these were recorded after the exhaust snapped off explaining why they were at least a second faster than subsequent tests. The lighter HQ GTS 350 auto with the early spec engine in November 1972 posted 8.2 and 16.3 seconds for the same intervals, so it was a no-brainer to drop the final emissions-spec 350 for the Aussie 308 V8 which would then remain a Statesman constant until 1999!





Running Changes Over HQ Statesman Lifespan

- ❖ **July 1971:** Flat bucket or bench seat style, no headrests. Fine pebble Roebuck pattern vinyl with diamond pattern cloth option. Clear front parking lights, mph speedo. Vinyl roof standard on de Ville.
- ❖ **Late 1971:** Head restraints compulsory for January 1972 ADR.
- ❖ **Mid-1972:** Deeper contoured seats with extra bolstering. Early chrome seat hinge brackets and vinyl pattern continue. Dual speedo reading with mph main reading, supplementary km/h, miles odometer.
- ❖ **1973:** Upgrade sometimes referred to as Series II. New ADR dictates separate amber front indicators and parking lights inside headlights. New long-grain vinyl on seats and doors, old pattern continues on steering wheel, centre console, dash and armrests. Black seat hinges with veneer recline adjustment. New Devereaux cloth face option. Inertia-reel belts.
- ❖ **Mid-1973:** Dual mph/km/h speedo reading with km/h main reading, supplementary imperial, metric odometer.
- ❖ **October 1973:** 350 cubic inch option continues as a low compression unleaded emissions engine with extra plumbing.
- ❖ **1974:** Full metric speedo. Replaced at October 1974 HJ release.



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The Check Before the Cheque

Body

The bottoms of the doors near the rubbers rot and are not easy to repair. The base of the guards and panels behind the bumpers are traditional Holden rust points. The sealant in the firewall seam near the ID plates shrinks and cracks for water leaks that rust away the front and rear floors. Because the corners of the front plenum chamber trap dirt and rust, this area must be checked for holes by looking up from under the dash. Failed screen seals can pour water inside especially the boot. The correct headlight, parking light and indicator combination must match the year of manufacture for serious buyers.

Door rubbers, window guides and other trim around the doors and glass will shrink with age. They can be replaced but can be fiddly when valuable trim has to be disturbed.

HQ colour ranges changed each year. Some colours were never available with the later trim and light upgrades and vice versa.

Cabin

HQ seats were among the first to feature injection moulded foam pads which took until mid-1972 to get the shape right, then 1974 to get the materials right. Those that have collapsed or broken away are best repaired with improved 1974 padding. Some 1971 and early 1972 cars will have the later front seat design retro-fitted under warranty. Earlier owners not aware of the different vinyl patterns and cloth options specific to that year often repaired the car incorrectly.

Engine

The 350 cubic inch engine is bullet-proof providing it gets clean oil, while the early Aussie V8s were subject to rocker and camshaft issues, bore distortion and casting faults.

At this age, all engines need a compression test and careful investigation of any internal rattles or knocks.

Make sure it is the correct engine for that

example's build plate. Use any head work to add hardened valve seats for unleaded fuel.

Transmissions

The THM400 auto is long-lasting but can be suffering from old age and neglect.

The Trimatic can be lazy to engage and pick up a gear as it wears. A rare Custom with the Aussie four-speed manual can simply become so noisy and the shift linkages wear so badly that it needs to be overhauled immediately before the box is destroyed.

Brakes and Suspension

Control arm bushes are a routine item and steering will often need tightening up. Watch for fatigue cracks in the perimeter frame near the suspension pick-up points. Check that the anti-roll bar mounting and coupling bushes are tight. For an everyday car, it is no disadvantage if geometry, suspension and wheels/tyres are

upgraded to HZ. Discs are often undersized and shudder under light braking. Check master cylinder and rear wheel cylinders for leaks and power booster operation. Handbrake can also give problems with age.

Prices

The good news is that local LWB prices have lagged behind top spec standard wheelbase cars, the bad news is that most are now so rare that specific LWB parts including the correct colour-coded trim items and body parts are not easy to find. A complete and tidy \$6000 restorer can turn out expensive against a sharp \$30,000 example if the wrong parts are missing or rusted out. The right HQ de Ville 308 with sports instruments, front buckets and right colour is worth at least \$25,000 and as high as \$35,000. The de Ville 350 is so rare that a complete but worn example could fetch \$9,000 then might even reach \$50,000 for one with all factory options.





1971 HQ Statesman de Ville 308

Engine: V8, pushrod overhead valves, cast iron block and heads, Rochester four barrel downdraught carburettor.

Bore and Stroke: 101.6 X 77.7mm

Capacity: 308cubic inch/5047cc

Compression Ratio: 9.0:1

Maximum Power (Gross): 179 kW/4800 rpm

Maximum Torque (Gross): 427Nm/3000 rpm

Transmission: Trimatic 3 speed auto

Wheels/Tyres: Steel 5JJ x 14/E78 L14 white wall cross ply

Brakes: Ventilated discs/drums

Final Drive: 2.78:1(3.08 and 3.36:1, LSD opt)

Maximum speed: 167km/h

0-100 km/h: 8.1 seconds

Standing 400 m: 16.2 seconds



❖ Thanks to Leo Pruneau and Phil Zmood

Edna and Doug Mitchell

Special thanks to Doug and Edna for supplying their May 1973-build Statesman de Ville 308 for photography. The Mitchells are members of the 60s to 80s Holden Enthusiasts Club, which meets at Club Kilsyth (corner of Colchester and Canterbury Roads, North Bayswater, Victoria) on the first Monday of every month. The Mitchells purchased the original condition Statesman from another club member keen to ensure the car was owned and enjoyed by like-minded folk.

