

HI 60

**WAGONS FOR THE  
WILDERNESS**

**MITSUBISHI VS NISSAN VS TOYOTA**

## It's the old school Toyota and Nissan against the new-guard Mitsubishi: two big sixes against a smaller four

**I**N JUNE 1983 we took the then brand new Mitsubishi Pajero and a Holden Jackaroo into tough four-wheel drive country to find a winner. Debate was unnecessary, because the two-door Pajero was obviously superior.

About the only area in which it fell behind the Jackaroo was room, but we knew a long-wheelbase four-door version was coming and, in such configuration, the Pajero would overcome that handicap.

Well, come it has, and overcome it has. The extra doors and space add significantly to the price, however, and the long-wheelbase Pajero has moved out of Jackaroo territory and towards that of the larger, traditional purpose-built 4wds. So it seemed only logical to compare the latest Pajero with the big off-road muthas — the Toyota Series Sixty Land Cruiser and the Nissan Patrol.

The MQ Patrol was introduced in 1980 to a mixed response. While its styling and performance impressed many potential buyers, serious offroaders were worried by its suspension: the MQ lacked sufficient wheel travel and rode — not to put too fine a point on it — like a mule. Nissan Australian moved to remedy some of the MQ's defects and a revised, facelifted version was launched late last year. In essence, of course, the Nissan Patrol remains one of the old guard — a big, heavy 4wd that owes little to sedan design.

Nissan has aimed the latest Patrol station wagon squarely at the Series Sixty Landcruiser, which was launched in 1981 and met with a very enthusiastic response from 4wd enthusiasts. And they put

their money where their mouths were; the Series Sixty has sold excellently and on occasion entered the top 10 sellers in the passenger car market! There have been some refinements since 1981, not the least of which is the incorporation of a five-speed gearbox.

In this company the Mitsubishi Pajero is very much the odd horse out. Its engine is a 2.6 litre four straight out of the Sigma. Its front suspension is independent. Its entire construction makes it seem more like a car than a truck, even though it runs a separate chassis. From the driver's seat it could be almost any large sedan, albeit one with a high roofline.

Not only is it the lightest, it's also the cheapest. The long-wheelbase Pajero enters the fray at \$16,200 for the petrol model and the turbo diesel option costs an extra \$1750. Included in the Pajero wagon's specification are three rows of multi-adjustable seats that offer space for up to seven people. For an extra \$250 you can specify hydraulically suspended front bucket seats. The test wagon had the petrol engine and the suspension seats, bringing its price to \$16,450.

To buy this kind of seating capacity in a Landcruiser you must order the Sahara high-roof wagon. The Deluxe petrol wagon in low-roof form is priced at \$18,357. The diesel costs \$20,447. The petrol-engined Sahara is \$20,321 and the diesel \$22,411. WHEELS wanted to test a Sahara but none was available, so we wound up with a diesel Deluxe. Although it lacked a third row of seats, it did provide seating for six, with the front passenger seat wide enough for two (with

## MITSUBISHI



*Pajero has an edge over its rivals in comfort and handling on roads and smooth trails. Understeer is moderate, as is body roll*

## NISSAN



*Patrol is a handful when pushed with sudden understeer and bad bump steer. Lack of suspension travel adds to its woes in the rough*

## TOYOTA



*Landcruiser has copious body roll and understeer on smooth surfaces, and vague power steering but comes into its own in tough going*

seat belts). The test wagon also boasted a pricey bull-bar (\$350) plus air (\$887) bringing its price to \$21,684.

The Deluxe Patrol wagon starts at \$18,230, but the test vehicle was fitted with the \$3020 turbodiesel luxury pack which includes stereo, cloth trim, air and a rear jerry can arrangement. More importantly, this pack also includes the turbodiesel engine. So the test vehicle was a Deluxe wagon fitted with the luxury pack (follow all that?) and its price was \$21,250. Thus specified, the Patrol has a third row of seats to bring the seating capacity to seven, like the Pajero. A limited slip diff is also standard.

All the test vehicles had cloth trim, stereo (although the Pajero's was supposed to be a four-speaker system, we found only two), metallic paint and most of the creature comforts one expects in this price range. The Pajero lacked air, which is not available ex-factory.

It would have been preferable to have had either three petrol-engined vehicles or three diesels but logistics prevented this. There is little reason to suppose, however, that the major findings of this would have been changed if the test vehicles had come with different engine options.

## Performance

Hardened four wheel-drivers who count six cylinders as the minimum necessary for an offroad wagon should prepare themselves, for not only is the four-cylinder 2.6 litre petrol-engined Pajero in the same performance league as its six-potted rivals, it's at the front of that field, comfortably clear of the 3.3 litre Nissan turbodiesel and almost out of sight of the four-litre naturally aspirated Toyota Landcruiser diesel.

Standing 400 metre times are not highly regarded in this market sector but they do indicate the performance differences between the three vehicles. The Pajero

covers the distance from a standing start in 20.3 seconds, compared with the Patrol's 21.4 and the Cruiser's disappointing 22.9.

If you imagine that these figures bear no relation to what happens on the road, consider this: with 80 km/h already under the belt, the Cruiser requires a full 15 seconds to accelerate to 110, while the Pajero can perform the same task in 9.8 seconds. The Patrol is placed almost midway between them with a time of 12.7.

Where do such big differences come from? Well, for starters, the Pajero has a huge weight advantage. Its kerb weight is 1650 kg, compared with a whopping 1990 kg for the Patrol and a slightly more whopping 1995 kg for the Toyota Landcruiser. Mitsubishi might encounter some buyer resistance to its use of a four-cylinder engine instead of a six, but perceptive would-be purchasers will quickly realise the Pajero offers a greatly superior power to weight ratio. Its maximum power figure is 76 kW (at 4500 rpm), so it has to heft just 21.7 kg for every kW. The turbodiesel Patrol produces 80.9 kW, which leaves it with a weight to power ratio of 24.6 kg/kW. The Toyota Landcruiser diesel wagon romps into an easy last placing. Its 72 kW means it must carry a hefty 27.7 kg/kW.

Certainly the two heavier vehicles offer more impressive torque figures than the Astron-powered Pajero, and the Nissan's 255 Nm at 2000 rpm is particularly impressive (the Cruiser has 229 at 2000, the Pajero 192 at 2500) and helps to explain why it could almost keep up with the Pajero on long uphill stretches, while the big blue Toyota was rapidly shrinking in the others' rear vision mirrors.

When the topography is more or less flat, the Pajero romps away from both six-cylindered wagons and the difference on the road between the Nissan and

Toyota is less than you might expect — it is here that the latter's greater capacity goes much of the way towards compensating for the lack of a turbocharger. To get the most of the Nissan under these (or any other) conditions, you need to keep it on the turbo and preferably over about 2500.

Only the Pajero cruises comfortably at anything over 120 km/h. It is the only one of the three you could possibly make the mistake of referring to as a "car" and it certainly feels like one on the open road. The Mitsubishi will pull rather more than 140 km/h in fifth, given a long enough stretch. At a true 143, it is running at an unstressed 4500 rpm.

The Nissan peaks out at 131 km/h in fourth at the 4200 redline and will pull 136 in fifth at 3400. But these speeds are academic under most conditions because the dynamic qualities of the Patrol will ensure that prudent drivers opt for less speed except under near perfect conditions; at speed the Patrol is still a worrying vehicle, despite the undeniable improvements that have been made to it.

Toyota's diesel Series Sixty wagon is somewhat slower again. Under favourable conditions it can be coaxed to a true 136 km/h in fifth at 3500 rpm or 133 km/h in fourth at the screaming 4000 redline. But this speed takes a lot of reaching and the vehicle's effective maximum speed is more like 130 km/h and anything remotely like a hill quickly drops this further.

Buyers who are worried about the Pajero's four-cylinder engine will talk about towing. Certainly the Pajero's advantage will be lessened as total weights rise (changing, obviously, the power to weight ratios). And if you were talking about fully laden vehicles towing, say, a small camper van, then it is probable that the Patrol would be the best performer of these three. It

would take a mighty load indeed to drag the Pajero back to the Land cruiser's level of performance.

The whole question of performance comparisons comes down to this — under touring conditions and around town, only the Pajero feels like a conventional car. Car-like gearing enables it to post respectable speeds in the lower gears at the 6000 rpm redline — 44, 79 and 119. Fourth provides 136 km/h at 5000 rpm.

But anyone accustomed to modern sedans will find the Nissan's speeds-in-gears low and the Toyota's laughable. The Nissan runs to 35, 58 and 95, while the Toyota struggles up to 28, 51 and 87. Yes, those verbs are right, because the Patrol's turboed engine does rev out rather more happily than the Cruiser's naturally aspirated one. Highway overtaking manoeuvres can be hard both on nerves and ears in these heavyweights. It's a matter of some celebration that the latest versions do at least boast five forward speeds rather than four, although you must specify a diesel Patrol to get the five-speed box as standard equipment. By the standards of older Patrols and Cruisers they offer relatively quiet cruising. By the standards of the Pajero, they are crude and noisy.

## Economy

Yes, there are some benefits to be gained by choosing an expensive, underpowered diesel engine rather than a petrol unit. Both the Patrol and the Cruiser proved astonishingly economical, particularly when you consider that most of the driving was flat-out in those two so that they could keep up with the Mitsubishi. Over the total 655 km, which included some tough four wheel-driving, the Patrol averaged an impressive 7.2 km/l, (20.3 mpg) just ahead of the Toyota on 7.0 km/l (19.7 mpg). The Pajero made up the rear, with a still surprisingly good 6.0 km/l

(16.9 mpg) average.

In offroad conditions, the Pajero narrowed the gap but was always thirstier than its diesel-engined rivals. Over 235 km which took in the four wheel drive work, the Pajero returned 5.7 km/l (16 mpg), compared with the Toyota's 6.4 (18) and the Patrol's 6.5 (18.3).

### Handling, steering, brakes

It was in this category even more than in performance that the Pajero wagon put the others to shame. WHEELS conducted this comparo as a joint operation with *Overlander* magazine. During the afternoon of the first day, *Overlander's* Editor (and veteran of a million impossibilities) Ian Glover, was driving the Pajero. He was following the Patrol, which was following the Cruiser — both of which were being hunted as quickly as possible through a series of tight corners.

"I was just sitting back, having a smoke, watching you blokes," said Ian. "It's just so easy in the Pajero." In fact its limits are not especially high by sedan standards, but by the standards of the other two test vehicles they are impossibly high.

The Pajero corners with moderate initial understeer and some body roll. Thanks to the inclusion of a front anti-roll bar, the latest version corners more flatly than did last year's test Pajero. All Pajeros now get a front bar as well as a rear one. In the case of the wagon, this is something to be grateful for, because with the rather soft suspension and that high roof, body roll would be considerable, as last year's Pajero showed.

But you really can't compare the Pajero with the others. Its basic dynamics are like a Japanese sedan's — say a Sigma or a Corona. The steering is power-assisted and a little on the light side for very fast cruising. Three point-seven five turns lock to lock on a

rather large turning circle of 11.8 metres in 2wd make for acceptably direct steering.

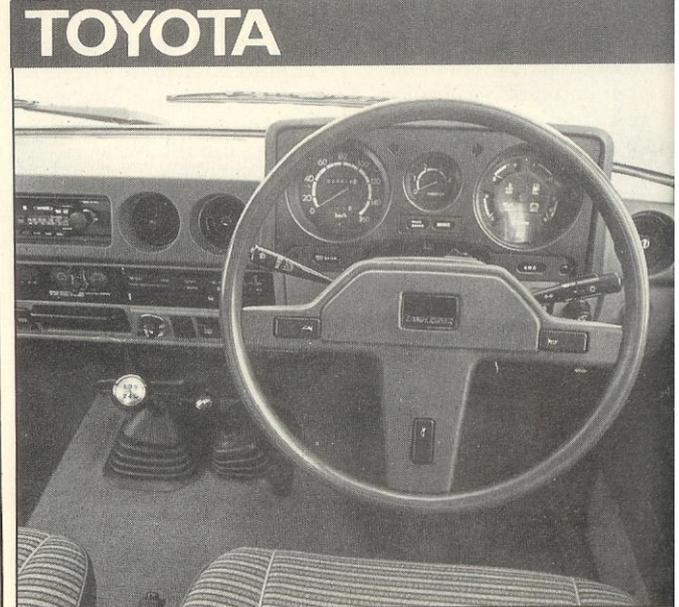
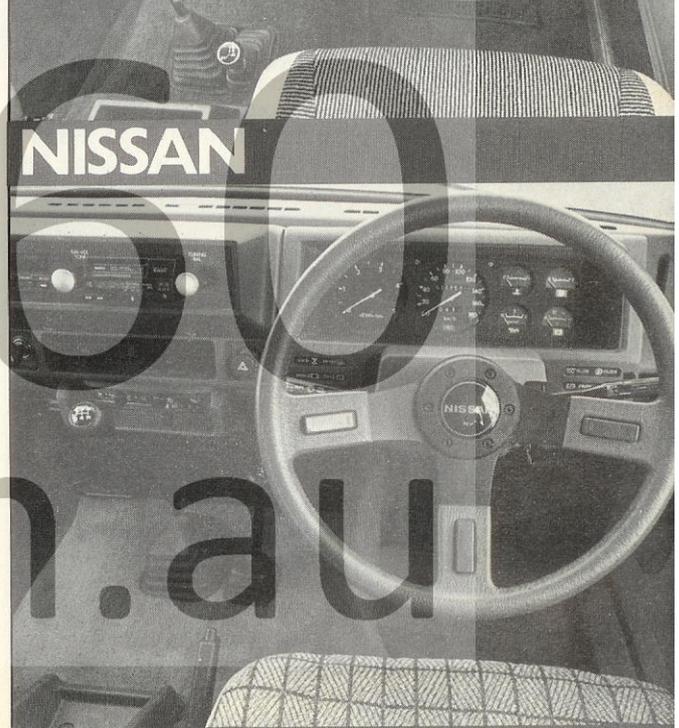
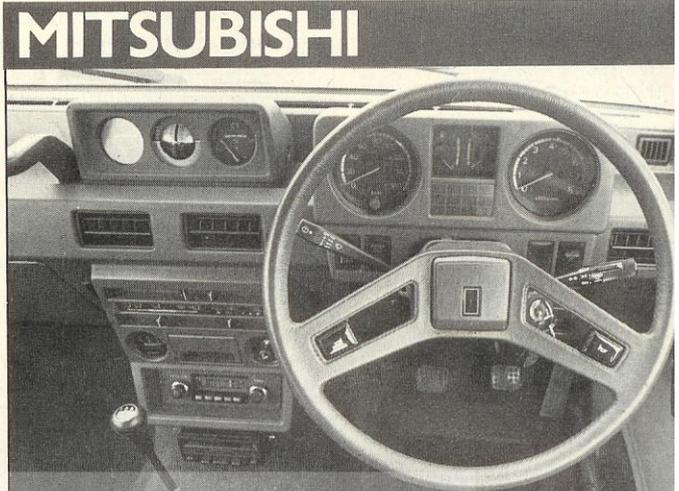
Much of the Pajero's on-road competence derives from its use of an independent front suspension instead of a beam axle. Double wishbones with torsion bars combine with intelligent geometry to point the front of the vehicle pretty much in the direction the driver wants it to go.

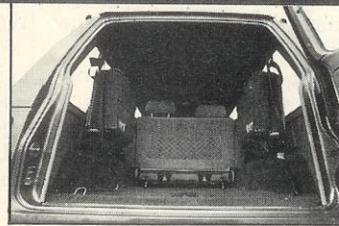
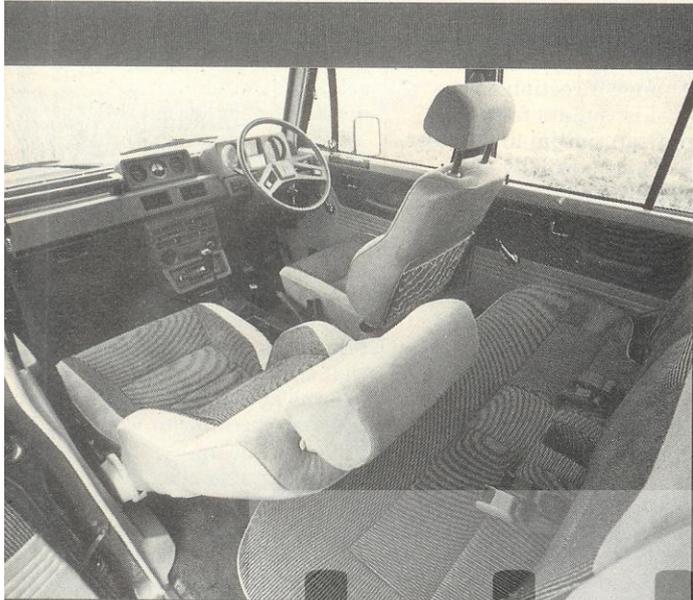
If you think all that is nothing to get excited about, try the Toyota Landcruiser wagon. It offers abundant body roll, copious understeer, vague power steering and very low cornering limits.

Toyota has gone to the trouble of providing servo assistance for the steering but hasn't bothered about raising its gearing. Four and a half turns lock to lock means that there is nearly as much wheel-twirling as you experience on a manual-steered Falcon — and that's saying something. Not only is this steering too low-g geared, but it is utterly devoid of anything approaching "feel". You enter a corner, dial in more lock, more lock, more lock. Push the Cruiser hard enough and you'll get copious roll oversteer.

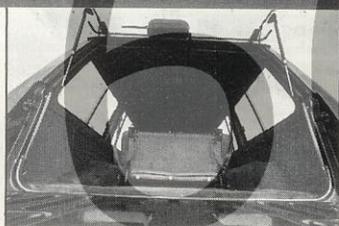
About the best thing that can be said of the big Toyota's handling is that it is predictable. All that understeer discourages you in the first place. Should you choose to press on, then the whole device loses shape progressively — there is no sudden, vicious tail-swing or anything of that kind; when the tail slides, it does so in a predictable, even way. The soft, fairly long-travel suspension helps here and mid-corner bumps don't unsettle it in a frightening way. You can even get to enjoy throwing it around, although on the whole it's easier to simply decide to drive the Landcruiser sedately at all times.

The Patrol constitutes a different and more worrying case. The test vehicle had

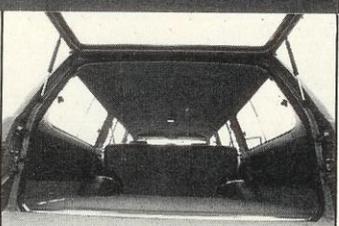




*Pajero's interior is most car-like and controls are light and easy to use. Pantograph front seats are useful in rough conditions and side-folding third row seats are also a good touch. Instruments are not as clear as Patrol's and clinometer is pure gimmickry. Interior is roomy, comfortable for occupants of all three rows of seats; on-road it's car-like, on-trail a step above rivals*



*Patrol's interior looks more impressive than its rivals' and instruments are models of clarity. Seats are excellent, with good cloth and high comfort level for all three rows. Third row folds back against second row, but for external size, Patrol is not as space efficient as Pajero. Transmission tunnel also crowds against clutch pedal, leaving nowhere to rest left foot*



*Landcruiser's instruments are not as clear as rivals' but gear change and controls are not as truck-like as Patrol's. Both rows of seats lack shape and provide support only in that they keep occupants off the floor. Interior room is generous though, as is load carrying area. Like Patrol, opening third-row windows are plus features. Interior overall is uninspired, plain*

power-assisted steering and there is more weight and feel in the system than in either of the others. So at very low speeds, you start by imagining that the Patrol will have reasonable dynamics. It hasn't.

As soon as you tackle a corner even moderately fast, you will rediscover understeer. The Patrol isn't like the Cruiser, where the understeer escalates gradually; it comes in a rush. The front of the car wants to run extremely wide and you find yourself grabbing lots more lock. After this it all settles down a bit, unless you should be unlucky enough to run over a bump with either of the rear wheels, when the Patrol will bump off line. The bump steer is terrible now; we hate to think how bad it was before Howard Marsden and his team of engineers revised the Patrol's suspension.

Perhaps the Patrol has marginally higher limits on a smooth surface than does the Cruiser. We weren't game to find out. When it lets go and that 1990 kilogram mass starts heading towards the opposite side of the road, behind the Patrol's sporty looking steering wheel is an excellent place not to be.

Because of the Patrol's unnerving road manners when pushed, it is difficult to assess the quality of the optional power steering in isolation. It becomes merely academic to say that the Patrol's steering is better than the Cruiser's, because what it's connected to isn't. Those who habitually drive slowly will find the steering nicely weighted and quite direct; those who drive faster will wish the system relayed messages to a decent front suspension.

The Patrol is also sadly lacking in the brakes department. It stops, but fade sets in much more rapidly than on either of the other vehicles and the pedal requires higher efforts (so at least it's honest). On paper the system looks to be at

least the match of the Toyota's, but sustained descents quickly overtax it.

The Landcruiser brakes considerably better under all conditions than the Patrol. The pedal has a progressive feel and the system resists fade quite well. And, because of the extra compliance in the suspension, the Cruiser is less likely to jump around under brakes.

Once again, however, it is the Pajero that shows the way, and not surprisingly when you consider its weight advantage. Simply, it brakes like a car, where even the Cruiser never allows you to forget that there is heaps of weight around you that is going to take quite a lot of slowing down. The Pajero's brakes stand up to plenty of abuse and the pedal has plenty of feel and a progressive action.

All three vehicles can be held on their handbrakes on very steep slopes, which is no less than you would expect of any serious 4wd.

## Ride, comfort

Both the Toyota Landcruiser and the Nissan Patrol still use a non-independent front suspension. A large amount of unsprung weight is just one unfortunate consequence of this system. The Pajero has an independent front suspension and its combination of torsion bars and double wishbones make it much more car-like than the others, not only in its handling but also in its ride.

At low speeds both the Cruiser and the Patrol are hard-riding by sedan standards. The Cruiser does smooth out considerably as speeds rise, although some conditions catch the suspension out at any speed — it gets quite bouncy over undulating bitumen, but not in a way that has it moving off-line.

The Patrol's ride is never comfortable, either on road or off. What is unacceptably firm at suburban speeds remains so on the highway and on fire-trails, too. A lack

of suspension travel exacerbates this problem and it doesn't take much of a bump on the highway or the trail to jolt the heavyweight Nissan and all its unsprung weight off-line.

One such situation was when I was driving the Patrol at the rear of the group. The road was narrow bitumen and a bus occupied almost the entire left-hand side of the road. The Pajero and the Landcruiser passed the bus. I knew that the Patrol had more than sufficient power to enable me to pass in the space I could see ahead; what worried me was the width of the road — if one of those bumps was deeper than it appeared, the vehicle might jump just about anywhere. I stayed

behind the bus for a long way. When you are driving a vehicle that is as reluctant to change direction as the Patrol is, suffers from significant initial understeer, doesn't stop rapidly and generally prefers to be driven slowly, you tend to hang back.

The Pajero is worlds apart from the Patrol in its ride quality. Some sedans are noticeably more comfortable, but the Pajero is never harsh. To step out of either of the others on a potholed road and into the Mitsubishi is to be aware that this is a battle of the generations — the old guard 4wds versus the new.

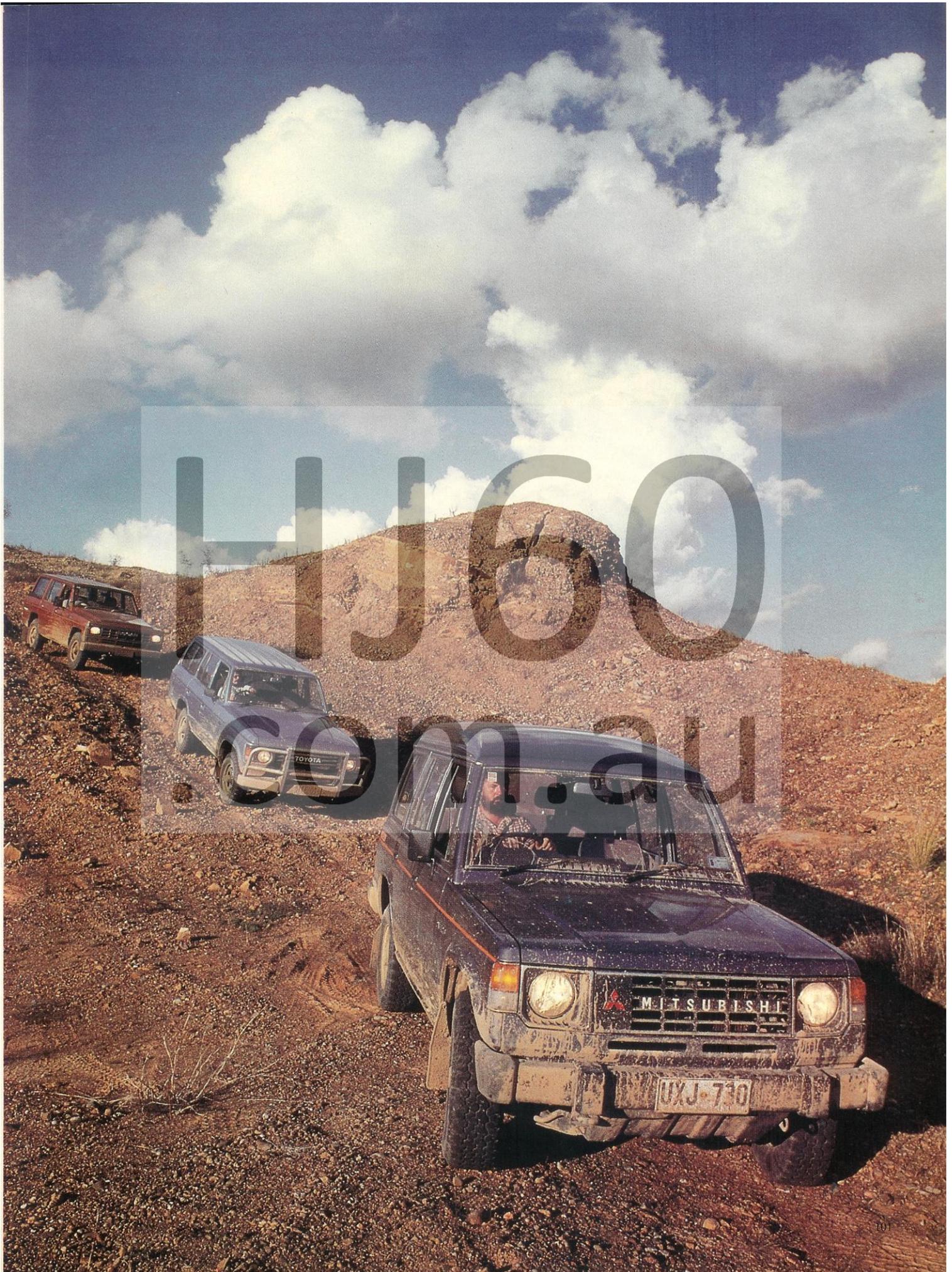
The Patrol would be even less comfortable to travel in if it didn't have such

comfortable seats. Driver and front passenger find themselves in individual seats that would not disgrace a sedan and they're sensibly trimmed in high quality fabric.

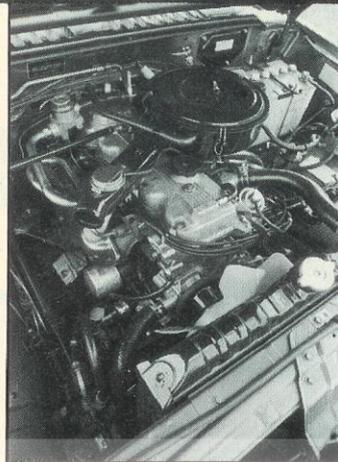
By comparison the Toyota seems impoverished. The seats — all of them — lack any shape and provide support only in the sense that they keep you off the floor. It is fortunate indeed that the Cruiser's ride softens at highway speeds because the interior would otherwise be an uncomfortable place to be. The seats are trimmed in a reasonable quality fabric but are otherwise sub-standard.

The test Pajero boasted Mitsubishi's pantograph seats up front. One of the

| PRICES                      |   | TOYOTA                    | NISSAN                                    | MITSUBISHI                     |   |       |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|-------|
| Base price                  |   | \$18,357                  | \$18,230                                  | \$16,200                       |   |       |
| Price as tested             |   | \$21,684                  | \$21,250                                  | \$16,450                       |   |       |
| ENGINE                      |   | diesel                    | turbo diesel                              | petrol                         |   |       |
| Cylinders                   |   | six, inline               | six, inline                               | four, inline                   |   |       |
| Valves                      |   | ohv                       | ohv                                       | sohc                           |   |       |
| Induction                   |   | mechanical fuel injection | mechanical fuel injection                 | single dual-throat carburettor |   |       |
| Comp ratio (to one)         |   | 19.0                      | 21.6                                      | 8.2                            |   |       |
| Bore/stroke (mm)            |   | 91/102                    | 83/100                                    | 91.1/98                        |   |       |
| Capacity (cm <sup>3</sup> ) |   | 3980                      | 3246                                      | 2555                           |   |       |
| Max power (kW/rpm)          |   | 72/3500                   | 80.9/4000                                 | 76/4500                        |   |       |
| Max torque (Nm/rpm)         |   | 229/2000                  | 255/2000                                  | 192/2500                       |   |       |
| TRANSMISSION                |   |                           |   |                                |   |       |
| Ratios                      | High                                      | Low                       | High                                      | Low                            | High  | Low   |
| First                       | 4.843                                     | 9.497                     | 3.897                                     | 8.082                          | 3.740   | 7.271 |
| Second                      | 2.619                                     | 5.136                     | 2.370                                     | 4.915                          | 2.136   | 4.152 |
| Third                       | 1.516                                     | 2.973                     | 1.440                                     | 2.987                          | 1.360   | 2.644 |
| Fourth                      | 1.000                                     | 1.961                     | 1.000                                     | 2.074                          | 1.000   | 1.944 |
| Fifth                       | 0.845                                     | 1.657                     | 0.825                                     | 1.711                          | 0.856   | 1.664 |
| Final drive                 | 4.111                                     |                           | 4.375                                     |                                | 4.875   |       |
| Km/h per 1000 rpm           |   |                           |   |                                |   |       |
| First                       | 6.9                                       | 3.5                       | 8.4                                       | 4.1                            | 7.3   | 3.8   |
| Second                      | 12.7                                      | 6.5                       | 13.8                                      | 6.6                            | 12.7  | 6.5   |
| Third                       | 21.9                                      | 11.2                      | 22.7                                      | 10.9                           | 19.9  | 9.6   |
| Fourth                      | 33.2                                      | 16.9                      | 32.7                                      | 15.8                           | 27.1  | 13.9  |
| Fifth                       | 39.3                                      | 20.0                      | 39.6                                      | 19.1                           | 31.6  | 16.3  |
| CHASSIS                     |   |                           |   |                                |   |       |
| Front suspension            | semi-elliptic leaf springs, anti-roll bar |                           | semi-elliptic leaf springs, anti-roll bar |                                | double wishbones with torsion bars, anti-roll bar |       |
| Rear suspension             | semi-elliptic leaf springs                |                           | semi-elliptic leaf springs                |                                | semi-elliptic leaf springs, anti-roll bar         |       |
| Brakes                      | servoed discs/drums                       |                           | servoed vented discs/drums                |                                | servoed vented discs/drums                        |       |
| Steering                    | power recirculating ball                  |                           | power recirculating ball                  |                                | power recirculating ball                          |       |
| Turning circle (m) claimed  | 13.4                                      |                           | 13.4                                      |                                | 11.8  |       |
| Turns lock to lock          | 4.5                                       |                           | 4.2                                       |                                | 3.75  |       |
| Kerb mass (kg)              | 1995                                      |                           | 1990                                      |                                | 1650  |       |
| Fuel capacity (l)           | 90  |                           | 82  |                                | 92  |       |
| Tyres                       | Dunlop SP Road Gripper 205R16C6PR         |                           | Dunlop SP782 TG 7.50R16                   |                                | Bridgestone Desert Dueler 215SR15                 |       |



## MITSUBISHI



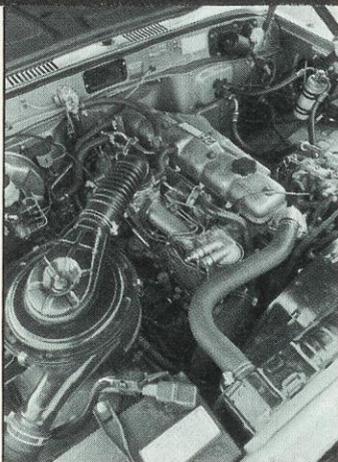
*Pajero has less engine braking and taller gearing than Landcruiser, is still competent*

## NISSAN



*Patrol lacks wheel travel and isn't happy walking downhill. Engine has impressive torque*

## TOYOTA



*Landcruiser is still off-road king by small margin over Pajero. Engine is least powerful*

testers didn't like them either on-road or off and always locked the driver's seat into place — the suspension system operates only when you want it to.

I found the bucket seat adequately comfortable when locked into place and more so when used with the pantographic system, which does absorb the bad road shocks. You can adjust the setting according to your weight — as long as you're between 50 kg and 100 kg, but in practice it is probably best to leave it on the highest setting, so that minor bumps don't have you floating up and down. Mitsubishi has shown some ingenuity in introducing this feature into a relatively light vehicle; if it works in pantechonics, why shouldn't it work in a 4wd? It is particularly useful over deeply rutted tracks.

### Accommodation and controls

On first acquaintance the Patrol's interior is much more impressive than the Landcruiser's. A thickly padded sports style steering wheel sits in front of a neat array of white-on-black instruments. There is a full-size tachometer rather than the tiny affair in the Cruiser. Generally speaking, the Nissan's gauges are more informative than those in either of the other vehicles, with numeric calibrations rather than 'H' and 'L' as in some of the Cruiser's. And while the Pajero's speedometer and tachometer are difficult to read at a glance, the Nissan's are a model of legibility and style.

When it comes to gear changes, the Pajero's is easily the slickest. Dare we say it again? It's just like a typical Japanese sedan's. The Cruiser's — some distance behind — is next best, with longish but fairly light movements.

The Patrol has the most truck-like gearchange and clutch — not heavy in the manner of an old Falcon GT, but much weightier than

drivers reared on current sedans would expect.

None of the three has a driver's left footrest, but the Patrol's excessively wide transmission tunnel virtually guarantees discomfort for the driver's left foot because there is virtually no space for it to rest between the clutch and the tunnel.

All three have a hand-throttle which is a handy item in tough offroad conditions where precise throttle control is important. The Pajero's is mounted rather too low to come to hand straight away.

Minor controls such as lights and washers are easy to operate in all these vehicles. Without exception, headlight performance both on high and low beams could be described only as adequate. When the Patrol's windscreen washers ceased to function (although the reservoir had plenty of water

and the lines were in place), we realised once again how this feature we all take for granted is a great asset, particularly in bad weather.

## Offroad

When you take the Toyota Series Sixty offroad, it doesn't take you long to realise why so many people are happy to put up with its lack of on-road sophistication. Of these three, it was the best over our tortuous test track.

What is a harsh ride at low speed on bumpy bitumen becomes relatively comfortable over a difficult fire trail. Designed-in flex in the chassis (the body is mounted to the chassis via a number of substantial rubber blocks) makes up for whatever shortage there may be in suspension travel. No, the Cruiser can't match the Range Rover for offroad

comfort but few, if any 4wds apart from the venerable Brit surpass it.

The Pajero's soft, long-travel suspension — independent at the front — make it marginally more comfortable under easy 4wd conditions, but the Toyota gains a slight edge in the really difficult stuff — helped considerably by its longer wheelbase.

The Patrol is always disappointing. It bumps around much more than either of the others and its lack of suspension travel ensures it will nearly always be the worst of these in difficult terrain. Even its standard limited slip-diff doesn't seem to make any real difference.

Everywhere we asked the Cruiser to go, it went, and usually the first time. There was one extremely difficult rocky patch which would stop many 4wds — the

Cruiser negotiated it on the first attempt. The Pajero took a bit more encouraging (and some slipping of the clutch) but made it on the second attempt. The Patrol made it (just) on the third attempt but both the right front and left rear wheel had lost all contact with terra firma quite a few times, where neither of the other wagons put a wheel wrong.

The Cruiser also scores in its engine braking. Diesel engines are better in this respect and Toyota's combination of engine and gearing left nothing lacking in the downhill 'walking' department. The Patrol and the Pajero require gentle braking on the steepest downhill pitches and won't 'walk' their way as slowly as the Toyota.

The Pajero *feels* the frailest of the three but this is mainly due to its lighter construction — in practical testing there was never any reason to assume it is any less tough than the others.

It does have less ground clearance than the others, although the Patrol's abysmal lack of wheel travel cancels this out in most circumstances. Once or twice we hit the Pajero's underside on rocks that didn't worry the others, but it was the front cross-member and the bash plates under the transmission that copped the bangs. Everything seems to be well protected on the underside.

Of the three, only the Patrol developed any mechanical problems during the test. Perhaps the failure of the washers is trivial, but we were disconcerted by the advent of a noise in the transfer case whenever low ratio was engaged — the noise was constant and didn't herald imminent failure, but it shouldn't have been there. Certainly the Patrol had covered a greater distance in the hands of merciless road-testers than had the other two vehicles, but 11,500 km is still low in our books.

The Cruiser had a noisy clutch thrust race but that

| PERFORMANCE                        |  | TOYOTA      |         |      | NISSAN      |         |      | MITSUBISHI  |         |     |      |      |      |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------|---------|------|-------------|---------|------|-------------|---------|-----|------|------|------|
| Top speeds (km/h/rpm)              |  | High        | Low     |      | High        | Low     |      | High        | Low     |     |      |      |      |
| First                              |  | 28/4000     | 14/4000 |      | 35/4200     | 17/4200 |      | 44/6000     | 23/6000 |     |      |      |      |
| Second                             |  | 51/4000     | 26/4000 |      | 58/4200     | 28/4200 |      | 79/6000     | 41/6000 |     |      |      |      |
| Third                              |  | 87/4000     | 45/4000 |      | 95/4200     | 46/4200 |      | 119/6000    | 61/6000 |     |      |      |      |
| Fourth                             |  | 133/4000    | 68/4000 |      | 131/4200    | 66/4200 |      | 136/5000    | 83/6000 |     |      |      |      |
| Fifth                              |  | 136/3500    | 80/4000 |      | 136/3400    | 80/4200 |      | 143/4500    | 97/6000 |     |      |      |      |
| <b>Standing start (secs)</b>       |  |             |         |      |             |         |      |             |         |     |      |      |      |
| 0-50 km/h                          |  | 6.8         |         |      | 6.1         |         |      | 5.0         |         |     |      |      |      |
| 0-60                               |  | 8.2         |         |      | 7.2         |         |      | 6.0         |         |     |      |      |      |
| 0-70                               |  | 12.3        |         |      | 10.8        |         |      | 8.4         |         |     |      |      |      |
| 0-80                               |  | 15.5        |         |      | 11.8        |         |      | 10.2        |         |     |      |      |      |
| 0-90                               |  | 19.6        |         |      | 13.7        |         |      | 13.1        |         |     |      |      |      |
| 0-100                              |  | 24.2        |         |      | 17.5        |         |      | 17.0        |         |     |      |      |      |
| 0-110                              |  | 33.9        |         |      | 25.1        |         |      | 22.3        |         |     |      |      |      |
| 400 m                              |  | 22.9        |         |      | 21.4        |         |      | 20.3        |         |     |      |      |      |
| <b>In the gears (secs)</b>         |  |             |         |      |             |         |      |             |         |     |      |      |      |
|                                    |  | 2           | 3       | 4    | 5           | 2       | 3    | 4           | 5       | 2   | 3    | 4    | 5    |
| 30-60                              |  | 7.6         | 12.6    | 16.8 |             | 7.7     | 11.9 | 17.3        |         | 4.4 | 5.6  | 8.3  | 10.7 |
| 40-70                              |  | 7.7         | 11.2    | 16.4 |             | 5.9     | 11.0 | 15.5        |         | 5.0 | 5.4  | 8.4  | 10.5 |
| 50-80                              |  | 8.7         | 11.2    | 17.4 |             | 7.3     | 9.8  | 14.0        |         | 6.2 | 8.6  | 11.0 |      |
| 60-90                              |  | 10.2        | 11.8    | 19.0 |             | 8.1     | 9.9  | 12.8        |         | 6.9 | 8.7  | 12.0 |      |
| 70-100                             |  |             | 12.7    | 26.4 |             |         | 10.8 | 13.4        |         | 8.2 | 9.8  | 12.9 |      |
| 80-110                             |  |             | 15.0    | —    |             |         | 12.7 | 17.4        |         | 9.8 | 11.5 | 14.6 |      |
| <b>Speedo km/h</b>                 |  |             |         |      |             |         |      |             |         |     |      |      |      |
|                                    |  | True km/h   |         |      |             |         |      |             |         |     |      |      |      |
| 50                                 |  | 49          |         |      | 50          |         |      | 47          |         |     |      |      |      |
| 70                                 |  | 68          |         |      | 69          |         |      | 66          |         |     |      |      |      |
| 90                                 |  | 88          |         |      | 88          |         |      | 86          |         |     |      |      |      |
| 110                                |  | 108         |         |      | 107         |         |      | 106         |         |     |      |      |      |
| Fuel                               |  | diesel      |         |      | diesel      |         |      | super       |         |     |      |      |      |
| Load                               |  | two persons |         |      | two persons |         |      | two persons |         |     |      |      |      |
| <b>FUEL CONSUMPTION km/l (mpg)</b> |  |             |         |      |             |         |      |             |         |     |      |      |      |
| Best                               |  | 7.4         |         |      | 7.5         |         |      | 6.1         |         |     |      |      |      |
| Worst                              |  | 6.4         |         |      | 6.5         |         |      | 5.7         |         |     |      |      |      |
| Overall                            |  | 7.0         |         |      | 7.2         |         |      | 6.0         |         |     |      |      |      |
| Minimum range (km)                 |  | 570         |         |      | 530         |         |      | 550         |         |     |      |      |      |
| Test distance (km)                 |  | 655         |         |      | 655         |         |      | 655         |         |     |      |      |      |

noise was already there when we collected the vehicle. It felt the most solid and best constructed of the three. The Pajero suffered the occasional squeak or buzz, while the Patrol had quite a range of vibrations, squeaks, groans and buzzes that showed up particularly in the 4wd section.

On sand the Cruiser would be the best but for its lack of sufficient power and torque to give it speed. Top speed on the test stretch was about 40 km/h, which both the Patrol and the Pajero could easily better. The Patrol feels more stable than the lighter Pajero, so it came out on top in this test.

## Conclusions

If you do a great deal of demanding offroad driving, then you should consider the Toyota Landcruiser Series Sixty, because under these conditions it is somewhat better than the Pajero. However anyone who has to travel considerable distances on highways in order to reach his or her 4wd nirvana would be happier with the Pajero. Its offroad ability is such that it will comfortably go into territory where many purpose-built 4wds with less wheel travel won't. Of these three vehicles, only the Pajero can be compared with ordinary sedans in its on-road behaviour.

We believe the Pajero heralds a new generation of relatively lightweight all-purpose vehicles that combine sedan comforts, wagon carrying capacity and the toughness of the old style "Ruff Stuff" 4wds. You don't think of the Pajero as a truck, where you definitely do of the others.

In terms of offroad capacity, it is in a superior league to the Subaru and Tercel, yet concedes little to either of these machines under touring conditions or even around the suburbs. So for WHEELS, the Pajero is the clear winner of this comparison. We simply can't accept the Toyota's crudities on-road as a fair price to pay

for a slight edge over the Pajero offroad.

The Cruiser comes second for that reason. Offroad it's hard to fault and you'll need to buy a Range Rover to gain an improvement here.

The Patrol is a distant last. Its compromise between on-road behaviour and offroad capacity favours neither. It is a sadly outmoded vehicle. It looks great, it's economical, but you could never buy it instead of a Toyota Series Sixty if you were serious about tackling difficult

terrain. Its on-road manners are rude, bordering on the dangerous. The Patrol leaves the driver with too slender a margin for error.

As if all that wasn't enough, there is still one more significant criticism to be made of the Patrol. It's a bulkier and much heavier vehicle than the Pajero, yet our testers could find no single gain in all this extra mass. It seats no more people, is less versatile in its seating arrangements than the Pajero and proves that bigger in 1984 definitely

doesn't mean better.

Add to the Pajero's virtues a pricetag that is more than \$2000 less than a comparably specified Patrol or Cruiser and you can see that Mitsubishi's entrant in the 4wd wagon market is a potential winner. You have to wonder about the future of the older style vehicles. Mitsubishi might be worried about buyer resistance to the Pajero's four-cylinder engine, but we believe that discriminating buyers in this class need look no further than the four-door Pajero. □

| BODY        | TOYOTA | NISSAN | MITSUBISHI |
|-------------|--------|--------|------------|
| Claimed Cd  | n/a    | n/a    | n/a        |
| Wheelbase   | 2730   | 2970   | 2695       |
| Front track | 1475   | 1405   | 1400       |
| Rear track  | 1460   | 1405   | 1375       |
| Length      | 4750   | 4690   | 4600       |
| Width       | 1800   | 1690   | 1680       |
| Height      | 1845   | 1845   | 1965       |

| INTERIOR                    | TOYOTA  | NISSAN  | MITSUBISHI |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|------------|
| Dash panel to rear seat     | 1740    | 1560    | 1600       |
| S/wheel to seat (min/max)   | 470/640 | 460/650 | 540/670    |
| Pedals to seat (min/max)    | 320/465 | 360/520 | 395/520    |
| Rear legroom (min/max)      | 280/440 | 190/365 | 280/415    |
| Shoulder width, front       | 1515    | 1440    | 1405       |
| Shoulder width, rear        | 1520    | 1430    | 1405       |
| Front cushion depth         | 510     | 480     | 480        |
| Front cush ht (min/max)     | 350     | 350     | 320/365    |
| Rear cushion depth          | 420     | 490     | 455        |
| Rear cushion height         | 360     | 330     | 430        |
| <b>Boot</b>                 |         |         |            |
| Floor length (seat up)      | 1165    | 970     | 1080       |
| Floor length (seat down)    | 1770    | n/a     | 1300       |
| Floor to roof (min/max)     | 1045    | 1045    | 1260       |
| Lip to lid                  | 1085    | 1060    | n/a        |
| Opening depth               | 905     | 950     | 1050       |
| Opening width               | 1365    | 1215    | 1020       |
| Loading height              | 760     | 710     | 680        |
| Rear floor width (max)      | 1510    | 1430    | 1440       |
| Rear width (between arches) | 1065    | 1020    | 950/880    |

| SERVICE REPAIRS                              | TOYOTA            | NISSAN            | MITSUBISHI          |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Warranty                                     | 12 mths/20,000 km | 12 mths/20,000 km | 12 months/20,000 km |
| Insurance rating <sup>1</sup>                | 2                 | 8                 | 2                   |
| Major service Distance                       | 10,000 km         | 12 mths           | 12,000km            |
| <b>Cost of replacement parts<sup>3</sup></b> |                   |                   |                     |
| Front bumper                                 | \$140.22          | \$145.24          | \$214.80            |
| Front mudguard                               | \$279.30          | \$233.90          | \$187.20            |
| Grille                                       | \$96.90           | \$129.08          | \$48                |
| Headlight glass/assembly                     | \$42.99           | \$91.90           | \$58.30             |
| Tail-light glass/assembly                    | \$85.43           | \$57.60           | \$100.80            |
| Windscreen                                   | \$234.12          | \$118.26          | \$283.20            |
| Full exhaust system                          | \$222.78          | \$143.09          | \$182.16            |
| Set front disc pads                          | \$31.02           | \$53.88           | \$56.16             |
| Radiator                                     | \$296.49          | \$470.43          | \$375.60            |
| Air filter                                   | \$20.52           | \$27.27           | \$22.20             |
| Door mirror                                  | \$26.44           | \$67.53           | \$32.76             |

● Notes: <sup>1</sup>Insurance ratings from the GIO on a scale between 1-9 <sup>2</sup>Minimum service cost made up of labour and replaced routine parts <sup>3</sup>Replacement parts prices include tax