



MG appoints WA distributor

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ONE of Australias most highly-regarded car dealers, Western Australias John Hughes, has become the states distributor for MG to make it his eighth new-car franchise and his third touchpoint with Chinese manufacturers.

His status with MG parent, Chinas huge SAIC automotive conglomerate, gives him control of the fledgling brands future and allows him to appoint further dealers in WA.

Speaking to GoAutoNews Premium, Mr Hughes said he was very confident about the brand.

I am confident that, after going over the brand with my sales staff, technicians and listening to outside people, that MG can be a competitive brand in Australia, he said.

Otherwise we wouldnt be involved. MG has a lot going for it, aside from the good reviews we are getting for the vehicles.

MG is part of SAIC which is a huge conglomerate and has a factory office in Sydney. So, unlike our previous experiences with ZX and Geely, we are not having to deal with people in a different language and who are thousands of kilometres away from us.

Mr Hughes said he had budgeted on selling 300 MGs this year.

The addition of MG to his franchises reflects his innovative approach to seeking automotive brands for sale in Australia. He has previously imported vehicles including Mahindra and became the Australian distributor for a (then) unknown brand called Hyundai.

He worked with Geely to get ADR standard vehicles into Australia but failed to obtain satisfactory crash test results from the factory.

He was also importing ZX utes (made by Hebei Zhongxing Automobile Co Ltd) but that company has since stopped making right-hand-drive vehicles.

I have experience with other Chinese manufacturers, specifically ZX and Geely, and they were not as successful as I originally thought, he said.

ZX, which made utes, appears to be concentrating on its domestic market, while Geelys production in China no longer makes right-hand-drive vehicles.

But I have a belief in the Chinese car industry and I had been holding out for a brand that could give a sophisticated market like Australia something that could compete on quality, performance, safety and price.

We havent given up on Geely. Geely has bought the majority shareholding in Malaysias Proton and theres are plans to make Geely vehicles in the Proton factories.

Those vehicles will all be right-hand drive (Malaysia is a right-hand-drive market). That will be attractive to Australia so we will wait and see.

Mr Hughes said that with the John Hughes Group becoming the MG distributor for WA, it allows the appointment of additional dealers.

We haven't even considered that yet we haven't sold one car yet but that's certainly something we are considering. he said.

There is a lot going for the first MG we have here. The GS has style, performance, features, very competitive pricing and the seven-year warranty that should be a great selling point to new-car buyers.

We will soon have the other SUV, the ZS, and the two cars, the MG3 and MG6. MG has said there are more variations on the way, so there will be more choice for buyers.

SAIC also has its light-commercial-vehicle division, LDV, in Australia. LDV is distributed by Ateco Automotive while the MG division has its own factory representative in Australia.

Mr Hughes is soon to open an LDV showroom in Perth, alongside his existing new-car franchises in Victoria Park.

His MG showroom officially open its doors in Victoria Park on April 18 and becomes the 14th dealership (and 15th showroom) for the brand in Australia.

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