

The Holden Prototype



1 Introduction

1.1 Introduce the exhibit

Located in the Landmarks exhibitions gallery in the National Museum of Australia, the Holden Prototype Car No.1 proudly represents the industrial achievement of Australian Engineers back to 1940s. The way that National Museum deliver the exhibits is attractive. There is not only a car model, but also the recreation of steering wheel and piece of iron material for visitors to touch and play. Since Holden car is an example of internal combustion engine driven car, a gear-cutting machine that functions the transmission gear is the key improvement and diversity point from other old-style coach such as Concord model. To show the engineering design of the engine, part of the transmission gear and gear-cutting machine are also recreated for visitors to understand how this engineering model works, and visitors can press the button to run the engine and hear the voice of working engine.

The history background of why Holden car are produced is important. After the World War 2, Australian society was worried that the peace of world is only temporary, and the risk of having another world war remains. Thus, the hope of Australian can produce a self-designed and owned car was strong, as the ability of producing car could guarantee that Australia is independent and self-satisfied during the possible next world war. In 1946, a group of Australian engineers went to General Motor workshop in Detroit, designed this Holden Prototype car with American Engineers.

The price of a car is always a topic. The public version of this Holden Prototype No.1 is called FX Holden and the price was \$733. To have better understanding of the price, it is nearly equal to 94 weeks' salary of a normal worker in 1940s. However, the

car was still sold out very quickly while approximately 18 thousand people signed up and paid the deposit without having seen the real car. This shows the support from Australian society to the national owned car and how attractive it was. At the museum, the exhibit was displayed openly without glass around it. Visitors can see the outside and inside through a semi opened door. With an open engine bay, it is easy for the visitors to look at the key component of this prototype and prove that this prototype is not just a case. Some of the car owners have the experience of open the engine bay of their car, it is such a good chance for them to compare how their car's component is different from the engine component of the exhibit. it is always a bit hard to image how the day would become without modern technology. The exhibit was designed in 1940s, at that time computer were not popular when design and produce the car. The car today has much more electronic devices than this prototype car, which help the driver and entertain the passengers. However, the exhibit only has very basic functions.

For security and maintenance reason the car is not open for people to sit inside, but the way to study and get familiar with the car is sufficiently provided by the museum. There are pictures of Holden automobile production line behind the

exhibit. It gives the visitor a glance of the car industry and tells everyone this exhibit is not only a car itself, but the whole history and system of Australian producing Holden. If the visitor is not comfortable enough to read English, these photos are the major way of knowing the background of this exhibit. The exhibition board also included formal introduction on the history background. Since the car is designed and produced in the 1940s, the structure and design strategy is different with the one most people familiar today. Thus, the anatomy of the Holden prototype helped the visitor identify the name of each part of the exhibit, this can easily help the visitor connect his history car with the modern car today. There is nothing more exciting than holding the steering wheel and “drive” the car by visitors themselves. The steering wheel is relatively simple design compared with the car today, whereas by holding the steering wheel and touching the recovered car paintwork piece, visitors includes me are being taken back to the 1940s.

1.2 Design concept

Our design concept includes three components, Holden car design structure, history which affect the development of Holden car, and local support towards car industry. Since we would introduce the outside and inner design of the car, visitors would have a basic understanding of this Holden prototype, and be able to know the design trend of cars back to World War 2. Some basic engineering explanation would help visitors to image the performance of this car and compare it with the cars today. The introduction of key components could let visitors understand the function of piece of equipment of a car. Visitors can also understand the industrial ability of Australia at that time, as well as people’s living condition and culture atmosphere.

The development history of Holden car also represents the development of Australian industrial capability and economics. The car produced in 21 centuries in Australia is much more complex and developed than this first prototype. The development of Australian car industry also includes learning from other countries. The design and produce of Holden car were also a case of Australian and American engineers’ corporation. The FX Holden is not just a car, it represents an era after the second world war. The ending of Australia car industry represents the change of economic structure due to globalization.

The consumption of automobile was increasing after the war. The price of the car was almost the same as the salary for two years, the car sold out in a short amount of time verify the point that people have huge interests of buying and using the car. From the government perspective, most of the police car in Australia is Holden brand. The amount of government purchase can show that the hope of developing local car industry of both Australian government and Australian citizen. The development of car industry cannot stay alone without the improvement of infrastructure. With increasing number of freeways, cars are not only for inner city transportation, but also suitable for longer distance travelling.