



The new Volvo 164E

# LUXURY BALANCE

**Volvo has earned its good reputation in Australia the hard way.**

The Australian car-buying public is highly discerning and is quick to damn a car which doesn't measure up.

So when a car starts on rung one and rockets to the lead in luxury car sales it has to be a good product — apart from all the advertising and sales push which also is essential.

The flagship of Volvo's latest range, the 164E, which was released earlier this year, is a good example of the balanced luxury and serviceability which appeals to Australians.

The Volvo 164E offers the luxury of real leather upholstery, air-conditioning and crystal-clear twin speaker music but underneath it is tough enough to coast across the Nullarbor needing nothing more than a top-up of petrol.

## Obsession

It reeks of Swedish design purity and over-engineering.

For instance the indicator lever is stronger than the gearshift on many cars I can recall.

Volvo's secret has been refining conventional

## Design a Volvo trait

design to the point of obsession.

The 164E is basically a very ordinary car.

It is not very far from the specification of a basic Holden, with similar body size and a three-litre six-cylinder motor driving the rear wheels through an automatic gearbox.

But add up 122 kW (175 horsepower) from the computer fuel-injected motor, power steering, four-wheel power disc brakes, quartz head and fog lights, heated rear window and tinted glass and you find the Volvo 164E is a very extraordinary ordinary car.

Volvo's progressive thinking on safety also offers its owners, drivers and passengers even more chance of surviving that "one big mistake."

To the long list of safety features like deforming nose and boot to cushion

accidents, collapsing steering shaft and the famous inertia reel belts which were fitted standard to Volvo years ago, this year's Volvos have side impact bars in the doors and a special horn boss which breaks and swivels under chest impact.

## Pollution

Apart from all else — including the Volvo's traditional conservative image — the injected 164E gets up and goes like all get-out!

Volvo cleverly opted for a lower-ratio back axle in the last 164 model which gives the new "E" quite staggering performance in a car running automatic gears, air-conditioning and power steering.

All-up, those power accessories must sap at least 14kw (20 bhp) from the motor which can still zing the "E" away from lights with the best V8s, give an easy 14 1/100 kms (20 mpg) touring and stay within our pollution laws.

Perhaps the only active safety feature the "E" lacks is a limited slip differential.

On wet roads I found it was easy to break back wheel traction with too much throttle, which immediately sent the tail into a wild slide.

An easy situation to catch with the excellent power steering — but a little heart-stopping for a novice driver,

## AT A GLANCE

Volvo 164E sedan four door, five seater, six cylinder.

Price: \$8253 incl auto gears, air-cond. and radio.

Registration \$118.65 private, incl st. duty.

Warranty: 12 months unlimited mileage.

Performance: 122 kW (175 bhp) from three litre six.

Top speed: est 184 kph (115 mph).

Acceleration: standing start 400m. — 17.0 secs.

Size: Length — 47m. (15 ft 5 in.) Width — 17m (5 ft 7 in.)