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## It's Official: Monaro Heading To United States

Holden today confirmed that Monaro would be exported to the United States next year to take its place among General Motors' flagship high performance vehicles.

The decision means Holden cars will be sent to America in volume for the first time since General Motors-Holden's was established in Australia in 1931.

Monaro will be sold in America as the Pontiac GTO starting late 2003 as a 2004 model, reviving the nameplate of an equally legendary performance car in the United States.



GM's Chairman for North America and Vice-Chairman for product development, Bob Lutz, announced the export program overnight to automotive media in Detroit, Michigan.

Mr Lutz and Holden Chairman and Managing Director, Peter Hanenberger, met earlier today to discuss the contract which was approved by the Holden Board of Directors earlier this month.

General Motors has committed to 18,000 GTOs a year featuring the 5.7-litre Gen III V8 engine shared by Monaro and Chevrolet Corvette and offering six-speed manual and four-speed automatic transmissions.

A show car version of the GTO will be on display at the Los Angeles Auto Show and North American International Auto Show in Detroit next January.

Full production will commence at the Holden plant in Elizabeth, South Australia, in September 2003.

Various modifications to Monaro were required to meet or exceed mandatory US legal requirements, environmental conditions and design cues for Pontiac.

Holden Chairman and Managing Director, Peter Hanenberger, today said from Detroit that the decision was fantastic news for Australia's premier car company and Australia.

"The rebirth of Monaro was a case of 'we must build this car' then developing the business case to do it - meeting US export requirements will be exactly the same," Mr Hanenberger said.

"Holden has been handed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity with this contract and we will use it as a platform for further growth.

"This decision represents an enormous amount of work by Holden and General Motors to bring this unbelievable dream to reality.

"The new GTO will be part of Pontiac's continuing evolution and deliver a high-performance sports

coupe to re-introduce a new generation to the legendary GTO name.

"This will be an ideal marriage between Australian design, engineering and development and the all-American 5.7-litre Gen III engine and transmission."

The contract will increase production schedules at the Elizabeth plant to 19 domestic and 13 export variants, overall production above 160,000 vehicles and total exports above 50,000 a year for GM operations around the world including the Middle East, New Zealand, South Africa, Brazil and the Asia-Pacific.

"Holden will achieve its production targets while increasing quality and customer satisfaction levels," Mr Hanenberger said.

"Possible shift changes and the required number of new positions will be determined by a working party reporting to the Holden Board later this year."

Mr Lutz and a senior team of GM executives were in Australia in February to inspect Holden operations and drive locally produced cars including Monaro.

Mr Hanenberger said a cross-company project team led by Brett Vivian from Holden's Business Strategy and Planning was established shortly after the GM visit.

Mr Lutz subsequently told the New York Motor Show in April that he had liked what he saw in Holden and loved what he drove.

"Monaro shares that V8 heritage and a brawny, muscular stance with the classic GTO and it will make a fine flagship for Pontiac. I think people will flat out love driving them," he said in April.

GM's decision is a global salute to the reborn Monaro which made its debut at the Sydney International Motor Show in October last year, having been unveiled with fanfare as a design concept in 1998.

Holden designed and validated Monaro 'virtually', using Simultaneous Math Based Process (SMBP) technology, considerably reducing turn-around time and expense.

Holden estimates that its \$60 million Monaro program investment - \$40 million for plant tooling and \$20 million for design and engineering - cost considerably less than a more traditional approach would have required.

The original Monaro made its debut and national front page news in July 1968 and subsequently became one of Australia's most loved icon cars. Holden continued production of Monaro until the HZ model in 1979.

Holden's Coupe Program Manager, Laura Thomas, has assumed responsibility for the US coupe program from Brett Vivian. Export Director Megan Stooke will also be involved.

The Pontiac GTO was renowned as America's first performance car and was in production from 1964 to 1974. GTO stood for Grand Turismo Omologato, an Italian term that originally identified grand touring coupes qualified for road racing. Enthusiasts have given various names for the car including the Goat, Great One, GeeTO or the Tiger.