

# City Slicker



WHITE MOTOR CORPORATION'S NEW HIGER CITY BUS IS CERTAINLY WORTH CONSIDERING IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A CITY BUS WITH A GOOD CARRYING CAPACITY, **ALLEN MATZEL** REPORTS

**T**he first of White Motor Corporation's Higer city buses has arrived on Australian shores and is currently doing the rounds.

ABC took the opportunity to have a drive of this prototype bus during its stay in Melbourne.

The 12.3-metre long bus has 47 seats in a two-door configuration, with room for two wheelchairs and 21 standing passengers.

The interior was clean and uncluttered with ample room for all.

On the outside the bus has smooth clean lines with detachable panels; these allow quick removal for easy repair.

Wheelchair access is through the front door with a lightweight fold-out ramp.

Entering the bus is via a step of 370mm (320mm knelt) with a flat floor to the rear door then two steps of 220mm to the rear

## SPECS

- Chassis/Body: White Higer
- Body Length: 12.3 metres
- Engine: 8.9-litre Cummins six-cylinder turbocharged ISL ERG engine
- Transmission: ZF 6HP594C six-speed automatic with retarder
- Capacity: 47 seats (room for two wheelchairs and 21 standing passengers)
- Axles: ZF deep-drop 'I' beam (front); Meritor unit (back)
- Power: 230kW (310hp) at 2,100rpm
- Torque: 1,423Nm at 1,300rpm
- Brakes: Wabco dual-circuit air brake system with ABS

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saloon followed by two steps of 220mm and 240mm to the rear seat.

Door widths are 1,200mm at the front and 800mm at the rear.

The passenger seats fitted to the prototype are Higer's own make but Australian seats can be fitted also.

The driver's area is well laid out – the only things that would be better relocated are the destination control and some switches that are below the steering wheel.

(CCTV), and all the multiplex control features.

Keeping the passengers and driver cool is a Thermo King dual-climate control air-conditioner, which works well.

Driving the White Higer city bus is a pleasant experience. The steering is light but positive and the turning circle is exceptional, which makes the bus very manoeuvrable.

Acceleration is good and the bus easily

2,100rpm with 1,423Nm (1045ft-lb) of torque being developed at 1,300rpm.

This is coupled to a ZF 6HP594C six-speed automatic transmission with retarder; gear ratios are first 3.43, second 2.01, third 1.42, fourth 1.00, fifth 0.83, sixth 0.59 and reverse 4.875.

The front axle is a ZF deep drop 'I' beam-type axle and the rear is a Meritor unit, with full Wabco dual-circuit air brake system with ABS.



A fully-adjustable steering column is fitted, and there are two control stalks. The left-hand stalk is used to operate the windscreen wiper/washer and indicators, while the right-hand stalk operates the four-stage retarder.

The driver sits in a comfortable Grammer air-ride seat. Vision from the seat is very good with no blind spots.

A screen in the middle of the dash shows the reversing camera, rear and front doors

keeps up with the other traffic. The brakes don't really need to be used as the retarder does most of the work.

The ride quality was equal to that of buses from the big European manufacturers.

The roads covered by ABC were typical western-suburb roads that the normal city buses are using.

Powering the Higer city bus is a 8.9-litre Cummins six-cylinder turbocharged ISL ERG engine developing 230kW (310hp) at

Destination equipment is a Higer unit with signs on the front, near side and rear.

Some other features include CCTV optional rear window, electric mirrors and reversing camera.

This bus is certainly worth considering if you are looking for a city bus with a good carrying capacity.

Thanks to Paul Slattery (Slattery's Bus Sales) and Sam Carr (White Motor Corporation) for giving ABC this chance. ■