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# Submitting Ideas and Suggestions to GM Holden

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Every year, many ideas and suggestions for the improvement of our vehicles, parts and accessories are sent to us by customers and others who are interested in our activities. Such submissions are very much appreciated, although from past experience, we expect only a very small number to be really new or useful to us in our work.

Nevertheless, we are willing to receive ideas and suggestions, provided they are submitted to us under conditions which ensure mutual protection and avoid unfortunate misunderstandings.

This information sheet has been prepared for the purpose of explaining GM Holden's policies governing our receipt of ideas and suggestions so those who do wish to make such submissions may do so in a manner which will ensure prompt and effective consideration.

## **What protection do I need to have for my suggestion before approaching GM Holden?**

One of our key policies in this area is that a suggestion can be considered by us only if you have first safeguarded your rights by applying for patent or registered design protection.

GM Holden considers that a provisional application for Letters Patent is sufficient for this purpose, but you may prefer to wait until later in the patenting process. Alternatively, an application for a registered design may suffice where the subject matter can be protected under the Designs Act 2003.

## **Why do I need to go to this extent before GM Holden will consider my idea?**

This level of protection for your idea is required by GM Holden to avoid the unpleasant possibility of a subsequent disagreement regarding ownership of an invention. It is also required to ensure that we are dealing with a person whose position at law is established.

## **How do I know whether my idea is eligible for patent or design protection?**

You will need to check with your local IP Australia office, located in each capital city, or seek the advice of a Patent Attorney. In addition, some state governments fund information centres for innovators. Check your government directory for details.

No employee of GM Holden has the authority to advise whether a suggestion is worth patenting, or would be useful to others. The decision whether or not to seek protection for your idea, is of course a matter for you.

## **What if my suggestion or idea cannot be protected in this way?**

We recognise that there are many ideas that cannot be protected, for example those having to do with ways of selling or advertising or running some part of the business. Unfortunately, we are not able to consider such ideas.

## **Will GM Holden agree to keep my idea confidential?**

No. Some ideas submitted may already be known to us or may be known to others or could relate to something that is under development by our research teams or those of our affiliated organisations, for example General Motors Corporation. Because of the embarrassment that could be caused through confidentiality undertakings with others

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regarding such ideas, our policy is not to receive any information in confidence. If any such information is sent to us, it will be returned immediately.

### **If I have taken out patent or design protection, how do I go about making a submission to GM Holden?**

You should send the following information to the address set out below:

1. Copy of the provisional patent specification or design application or the complete patent specification or registration documents if you have them;
2. Copy of lodgement receipt from IP Australia;
3. Covering letter with any additional information, such as test results, or aspects of your suggestion that may be of particular interest to us, together with the return address of the writer. Submissions should be sent to:

Corporate Lawyer  
GM Holden Ltd  
Box 1714 Melbourne Victoria 3001

### **What happens to my submission and when will I receive a reply?**

Provided all the information requested is supplied, the submission will be sent by the Corporate Lawyer to the most appropriate person in the company for evaluation. Once an evaluation has been completed, you will be notified of our level of interest in your submission. This process may take six to eight weeks.

You will only be informed if we are interested in obtaining any patent or design rights you may have in the submission. No reason will be given if a suggestion is rejected. As you will appreciate, to enter into an explanation of our reasons for non-acceptance would not only delay considerations and our reply, but might in some instances, force us to reveal future plans. We have no desire or obligation to do this.

### **If interest is expressed in my submission, will I be paid?**

Many people make submissions to us without wanting to be paid anything, even if their submissions amount to a patentable invention which we would like to use. In fact, some of these people feel we are ungrateful if we misunderstand and write to them the same kind of letter we would send to those who are trying to sell us an idea or suggestion. To be sure of avoiding such misunderstandings, we would be pleased if you say whether you wish the submission to be a gift to our company. If you expect payment for any rights obtained in your suggestion, again you should state this in your letter. If as a result of our evaluation, we do have interest in obtaining rights, negotiations will be initiated once this has been established.

### **Can I make a submission if I am an employee of GM Holden?**

If the person making the suggestion is an employee, or former employee, of ours, it could be that we already have the right to use any invention involved because of a law which gives an employer the right to use inventions made by an employee in the course of their work in certain situations. Employees may be eligible for awards under our Employee Suggestion Plan, but such awards are not made to persons outside our organisation.

We trust this pamphlet will be useful to those who wish to submit ideas and suggestions to us, and that it will promote and maintain mutual understanding and good relations.

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