



Rising to challenge

By **BRENT DAVISON**

SOMETIMES you just have to admire the philosophy of alternative uses for things and for Detours such an admiration moment is reserved for the CSIRO, which has taken a simple golf buggy and turned it into . . . the world's smartest golf buggy.

Developed by the High Resolution Plant Phenomics Centre (HRPPC), the mighty automotive critter has been built to be driven through fields to measure the specific characteristics of all the plants it runs across, its myriad instruments measuring the type and characteristics of each.

Why? So the white-coated lads and lasses at the HRPPC can gain information about each plant's appearance, function and performance by recording plant temperature, volume and ground cover.

That and the fact it looks really, really cool out on the fairways.

New year, new Landies

LAND ROVER has given its Freelander family a mechanical revamp for 2011 with a new 2.2-litre turbodiesel in two performance grades earmarked for the little Landie.

In TD4 guise the engine is good for 110 kilowatts and 420 Newton metres of torque and in SD4 configuration it manages the same torque level but lifts power output to



RIDING HIGH: CSIRO staffers Scott Berry (left) and Scott Kwasny aboard the plant-friendly Phenomobile.
 - Picture by Carl Davies. CSIRO

140 kilowatts. Land Rover has also added a fuel-saving electronic stop-start system to Freelander's manual transmission, making it standard on the entry-level car. The system does not feature on cars with the automatic gearbox (optional for TD4, standard with SD4) at this stage.

Visual changes for 2011 extend to new front bumpers and grilles, a new alloy wheel

design and a revised colour range while interior changes run to new seat fabrics and revised instruments.

The other critical alteration? The logo, which for 2011 changes from gold script on a green background to bright silver on green.

Ford revisits Fiesta

FORD has taken the big stick to its popular Fiesta range

with a major model realignment going into the back half of the year and the start of 2011.

For starters, the three-door Zetec variant has been given the shove and a pair of four-door sedans in CL and LX trim levels come into the mix.

Engine choices have been given a similar revision with a new 1.6-litre diesel option for the LX sedan and hatch as well as the Zetec. The special ECONetic variant continues and all petrol-engined models get the 1.6-litre, 89-kilowatt power plant as standard.

Transmission choices are interesting with a five-speed manual for ECONetic, CL hatch, LX hatch and sedan and Zetec hatch. CL sedan gets a six-speed automatic as standard equipment and the six-speed dual-clutch automatic is optional on all manual cars except the diesel-engined variants.

The revised Fiesta range rolls into dealerships in the fourth quarter with the five-door Zetec coming in the first quarter of the new year.