

# This 4WD is purely for entertainment

## Audio and visual bliss

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STEP inside John Pennant's Lexus and you do not go for a drive — you embark on an entertainment experience.

The Melbourne businessman, 40, has turned his new \$130,000 luxury four-wheel drive into a lounge room on wheels, with an \$18,000 audio-visual system.

While he pumps out music on a six-disc CD stacker up front, the rest of the family can enjoy a DVD movie in the rear. Or watch television. Or listen to a CD on headphones. Or experience speedway thrills with Gran Turismo on his PlayStation.

The 4WD has the same Dolby surround-sound system found in home theatres — seven speakers — with a sub-woofer — and is connected by fibre optic cable to minimise engine interference.

The vehicle also has a fridge, a GPS navigation system and a QuikTrak security system that enables it to be traced and its engine immobilised if stolen.

"You have to have your music," Mr Pennant said. "I could go further, but my wife would kill me."

His system has four remote controls and is so complex he had to have a training session.

Mr Pennant, a piano and keyboard player, drives more than 50,000km a year and figures he can make the most of his time on the road by having the best system to hear his Elvis Presley and Richard Clayderman CDs.

"This isn't just a sound system," said Michael Stephens, director of Freeway Car Audio at Malvern, which supplied and installed the gear. "It's an audio-visual entertainment system."

Mr Stephens said there was a growing demand for elaborate car entertainment systems incorporating television and DVD.

"We're doing one or two a month now," he said. "One customer paid \$25,000 for a system with five headrest screens."

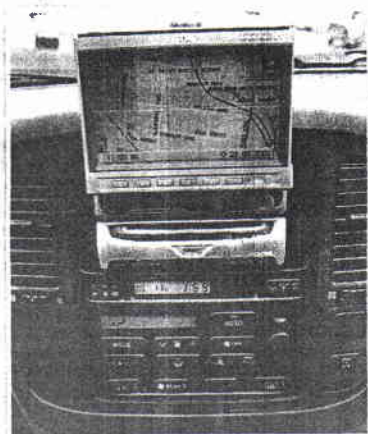
To comply with road safety laws, Mr Pennant's TV and DVD can be viewed through the Lexus's dashboard

Infrared wireless headphones <b>\$350</b>	16 cm LCD high-resolution headrest monitor to view TV, DVD, Nintendo and PlayStation games <b>\$1700 each</b>	Centre channel speaker <b>\$400</b>	Pop-up system command including GPS navigation, receiver, Dolby Pro-Logic 7-speaker surround sound system, and (when handbrake engaged) TV and DVD on 16cm LCD monitor. <b>\$4700</b>	Infrared transmitter for rear headphones <b>\$1300</b>	Dolby digital signal processor	TV antennae mounted in rear windows
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John Pennant: and his creation



Luxury ride: the \$130,000 4WD Lexus



I'll never get lost: the Global Positioning Satellite navigation system

6-disc CD changer  
**\$700**

Input for Nintendo and PlayStation

GPS satellite navigation transponder under seat  
**\$3000**

Hands on: the system needs four remote controls



Alpine TV tuner remote control



VDO Dayton Satellite navigation system remote control



Alpine DVD/CD player remote control



Alpine receiver/amplifier/monitor remote control

screen only when the handbrake is engaged.

When the 4WD is moving, the screen is used for the satellite navigation system.

In the back seat, meanwhile, passengers can use the two headrest screens for separate functions at the same time.

Installation for Mr

Pennant's silver Lexus LX470 took two weeks, including sending the headrests to an auto trimmer for insertion of the LCD monitors.

Because of the sophisticated installation, the system is almost invisible to passers-by when the vehicle is locked. The twin TV antennae are mounted discreetly

in the rear side windows, the front LCD monitor retracts into the dashboard and the rear screens are hidden by custom-made headrest hoods.

Even if someone managed to break into the vehicle or drive off, the hi-tech QuikTrak security system would send off a silent alarm to a

monitoring centre, allowing police to track the vehicle and disable its engine.

The security system allows the vehicle to be unlocked by remote control should the keys be locked inside.

Mr Pennant has a fondness for luxury vehicles, having sold a Toyota Vienta Grande

and a Holden HSV Grange before taking delivery of the Lexus.

With every new vehicle, he said, came a better sound system. His latest system was the pinnacle.

Bill Hedgcock, the salesman at Lexus of Brighton who sold the vehicle, said Mr Pennant was making a great

car even better. "He just keeps going," Mr Hedgcock said.

And he may be right. When the *Sunday Herald Sun* asked Mr Pennant if he had considered adding Internet capability to his vehicle, there was a distinct pause. "Internet," he said. "Now that's an idea."