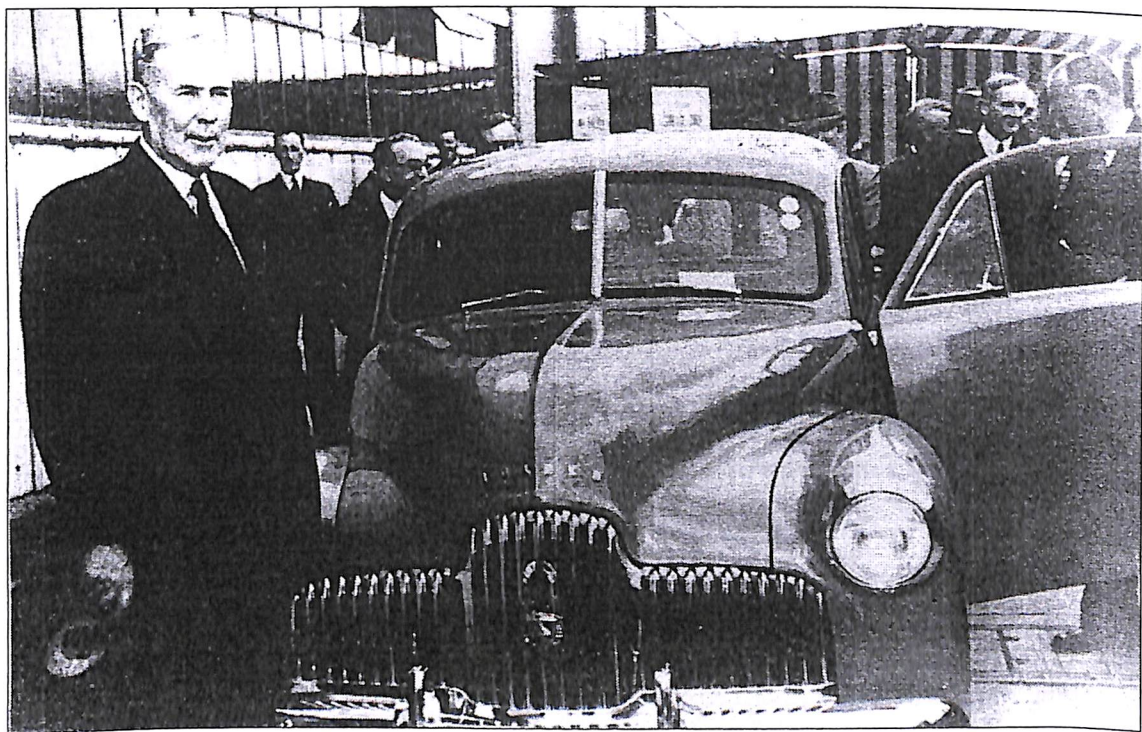




HISTORIC MOMENT: the then Prime Minister Ben Chifley at the launch of the first car produced in Australia, the FX Holden, in 1948.

50 years of driving history

HOLDEN is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the launch of Australia's first locally-produced car.

The FX Holden was ushered in by the Prime Minister of the day, Ben Chifley, on November 19, 1948.

Holden's chairman and managing director Mr Jim Wiemels said the company was proud of the contribution "Australia's own car" had made to post-war development, as well as the role other Holden models had played in Australian life in the past 50 years.

"We look forward to a very exciting 50th year," he said.

"Many of the initiatives Holden has planned will celebrate great moments and models of the past, while others will reflect a strong focus on the future.

"We intend to release commemorative models right across the Holden range. There will be an emphasis on community-based activities throughout metropolitan and rural Australia.

"Holden's original charter was based on meeting the demands of a

domestic vehicle market still in its infancy. Through the years, the growth of the company kept pace with that of the nation and successive models enjoyed extraordinarily high levels of acceptance. Today's VT Commodore clearly continues that tradition."

Mr Wiemels said Holden had played a major role in the Australian automotive market.

"Now that our vision encompasses the global marketplace, we have ambitious plans to emulate that achievement on a much broader scale," he said.