

1912

GME Takes Control Down Under

GM Export set up their office in Sydney in February 1912, only 8 months after the company was established in New York in mid 1911, so says Motor in Australia in an article in the September 1912 edition. Manager F.R. Pendleton arrived and leased an office at 9 Bridge Street, in the historic and National Trust listed, Burns Philp Building. This location may have been influenced by Henry W. Peabody & Co. who had their office on the second floor. Pendleton would benefit from the close proximity and probably their local knowledge, perhaps he even shared their office.

GME's first office (1912) was in Burns Philp House, 5-11 Bridge St.



Peabody & Co. were shipping agents, merchants and importers and it is believed that they were for many years, the transportation connection for Buick and GME between the USA and Australia. The Peabody Line operating out of Salem and Boston, ran clipper ships to Australia in the gold rush days of the 1850's, so they were well established locally. Now New York centered, they had family ties to merchant banking so it is possible that their association with GME was deeper than just shipping. It was certainly close enough for their Manager to attend Buick's 1916 dealer conference in Sydney which is detailed later in the 1916 chapter.

GM had been selling cars in Australia for some time past but GME's primary mission was to expand Buick distribution and establish the Oakland marque throughout Australasia. GME's Australian management also controlled GM's activities in New Zealand from

Australia until the formation of General Motors Australia in 1926. Later in 1912, GME moved office to 19 Grosvenor Street, Sydney. This location also housed their newly established garage and parts storehouse.

On establishment GME immediately reconfirmed Alick McNeil & McIntosh as the Sydney Buick agents. They had sold many Buicks since their first shipment in May, 1911, and were consistently promoting the marque in their weekly advertisements in the Sydney Morning Herald. They continued to represent their other marques but Buick became their leading brand over the ensuing months, with their press advertisements often exclusively Buick.

Within 18 months the agency had discarded all other marques, concentrating on Buick until the company was sold in 1927, except in 1920-22 they sold Chevrolet when Buick had no four cylinder model. By the end of 1912 Alick McNeil & McIntosh were actively establishing and servicing country agencies through New South Wales, supplying both cars and spare parts in accord with GME's marketing policy of appointing state wide master distributors for Buick.

GME now looked to expand their Buick distribution in other States and advertised the brand to gain recognition.

The Australian Motorist - November 1, 1912

What car has won more stock events than any car in the world?

What car is built in the largest factory in the world?

What motor shows the greatest power for its bore and stroke of any motor in the world?

What car has the greatest reputation for performance and endurance?

BUICK

At Brooklands, on June 5th, 1912, the small Buick chassis (stock chassis) established three new class records as follows:

Half mile,	25.27 secs.	71.23 m.p.h.
Kilometre,	31.41 secs.	71.22 m.p.h.
Mile	51.02 secs.	70.17 m.p.h.

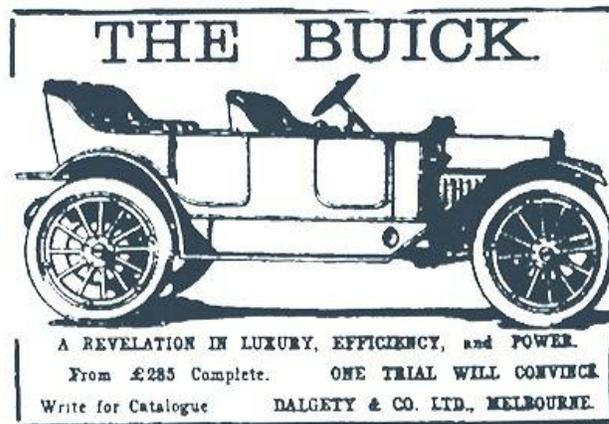
The Buick is the Car for You to Buy.

AGENCIES EVERYWHERE IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND.

GME quickly recognised that Australia's personal wealth in 1912 was rural based. Pastoralists and farmers made up the bulk of the country's middle class and had the spending power, but their cash flows were largely controlled by the big pastoral companies who sold the farm production and, in turn, supplied most of the hardware, farm supplies and consumables they needed, including cars. They gave credit based on future crops, wool clips and livestock production. As Buick was designed and produced to operate on American rural roads, somewhat similar to those existing in Australia, the marque was a perfect fit to the distribution direction GME would pursue in the other states.

GME next appointed Dalgety's, Melbourne, as Buick agents for Victoria. Dalgety & Co. Ltd. had an extensive product range in the retail arm of their operation which also engaged in automobile sales and distribution. They represented several auto brands such as Daimler, Napier, Austin, Standard, Delauney-Belleville, Lacre and Halley commercial vehicles from very early in the new century and were regular advertisers in the Sydney and Melbourne daily press.

The Argus - May 29, 1912



Their earliest press advertisement for Buick found during research was in the Melbourne Argus, May 29, 1912. This advt. ran weekly for four weeks and their new appointment as a Buick agent was confirmed with an advertisement in The Australian Motorist, June 1, 1912.

The next Dalgety Buick advertisement in the Melbourne Argus was not until October 2, 1912. This time gap could possibly be explained by the delivery delay from America if the second order was not placed until the first shipment was sold out.

Important Announcement



In addition to the magnificent selection of Agencies we hold for the World's choicest cars, viz., **Daimler, Austin, Napier and Delaunay-Belleville**, we have acquired the Agency for the

Buick

A car that stands alone for
Price, combined with Durability, Power,
Elegance, Economy.

Twenty-five horse power, complete with Houd. Screen, Five Lamps, Ready for the Road. **£285**

SOLE IMPORTERS
DALGETY & COMPANY LIMITED,
MELBOURNE

MARSHALL & CO. LTD. AUSTRALIAN BRANCH. 101 & 103, THE PRINCE OF WELLES STREET, MELBOURNE.

A look at the earlier history of this pioneering company reveals that Englishman Frederick Dalgety (1817-1894) arrived in Sydney in 1834, moving to Melbourne in 1842.

By 1848 he was an independent and well-to-do merchant, prospering even more during the 1850's gold rush. He returned to England in 1854, establishing an enterprise dealing mainly with Victorian pastoral companies and then expanding to have firms in England, Australia and New Zealand. In 1884 these companies were incorporated to become Dalgety & Company. Dalgety's importance to Australia was in the development of large scale marketing and production of rural produce. Prior to his death in 1894 he expanded his New South Wales and Victorian operations by opening branches in Queensland and Western Australia. Before the advent of the motor car this was a very large scale operation mainly buying farm produce, primarily for export, and selling a wide range of goods over much of the country, particularly to the backbone of Australia, the farmer.

Early in the new century in both Sydney and Melbourne, Dalgety's added motor cars, motor cycles and lorries to their retail products as agents for several marques. As a major trading house with extensive overseas connections, if a customer wanted something Dalgety's did not stock, they would use their network to procure the goods on a "to order"

basis, so it is quite possible, but not confirmed, they may have earlier sold an odd Buick against specific order.

Later in 1912 Dalgety, Perth became the state distributors for Buick in Western Australia, an appointment that would become the most successful of the Dalgety-Buick relationships lasting until 1927.

Then on November 16, 1912, Dalgety, Brisbane were appointed Distributors for Buick but this was not the success anticipated, lasting less than 12 months.

In their first year in Australia, GME made great progress with Buick, but their unknown Oakland marque took a back seat. It was displayed by GME at the Sydney Motor Show later in the year and in the Sydney Morning Herald, December 7, 1912, GME offered direct to the public, for sale “3 Oakland, slightly used, demonstrating cars at greatly reduced prices.”

A Sydney Morning Herald advertisement on Saturday 7, December, 1912, for Alick McNeil and McIntosh Ltd., 20-26 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, offered 3 Buick models for sale, along with the other marques, Hurtu, Marion, Gregoire, Straker Squire and Leyland Wagons in a discount sale for the month of December only.

The Buicks offered were - Model 36, 2-passenger Runabout, equipped, £275 - usual price £300. Model F, 5-passenger Touring, equipped, £195 - usual price £275. Buick Truck, 12 cwt, “a little tiger”, equipped, £325 - usual price £350.

The advertisement also said, “Live Country Agents Wanted - several good territories open” and claimed, “Buick - The proposition for Australia”

Alick McNeil and McIntosh’s advertisements in the SMH, Saturday, December 28, 1912, now made the claim “Sole Agent For This State”. In only 20 months they had grown to be a major player for Buick in both sales and distribution and held a respected place in the industry in NSW.