



The ruts stopped the Grand Cherokee too, at first. 'Gently, gently' on the throttle didn't work, but a bit more right boot and – presto! – the two stationary Goodyears started turning. So Gerotor couplings do work, but sometimes there are limits to how much oomph you can use to get unstuck. No point launching yourself out of a hole and over a precipice. Trouble is, if the Gerotors were set to

kick in any quicker they'd be like permanently engaged triple lockers.

One other point. Ain't no mountain high enough to stop these TDs, but be careful at deep water crossings with less than 500mm wading depth for the WG and barely 230mm for the KJ. A snorkel would be obligatory if you're keen to keep your expensive motor in one piece.

GEE-WHIZ!

Jeep's Gerotor (pronounced 'jee-rotor') coupling is an innovative attempt to solve the age-old 4WD problem of traction loss. The Gerotor is a bit like a viscous coupling, in that it's an all-mechanical automatic traction control system. Both couplings progressively lock opposing shafts that are turning at different speeds, using clutches similar to those in a conventional LSD. The difference is the way they lock the clutch plates together. A viscous coupling uses the gumming effect of silicone fluid, under heat generated by the differential action, whereas a Gerotor pumps hydraulic fluid to force the plates together. The difference between viscous/Gerotor couplings and electronic traction control is that the couplings avoid using the brakes, which are ETC's Achilles heel. Braking is the last thing you want when all of the wheels lose traction, such as in deep sand or mud. Not that any of these systems is the perfect answer, because they don't start working until there's a certain amount of wheel slip. They're designed to help drivers with little or no off-road skills, who don't realise they need maximum traction until it's too late. Anyone with adequate 4WD training would go for cockpit-controlled diff-locks every time, and switch them on before their tyres lose grip.

LIBERTY LEGACY

Photo: Subaru Australia



Subaru Liberty is sold as a Liberty here, so the Cherokee lives on...

What comes around, goes around... The Jeep Cherokee is no more – except in Australia. That's 'cause Jeep christened the new KJ the Liberty, but couldn't use that name here because it's been taken by Subaru. Ironically, Subie only picked Liberty because Legacy (the car's badge elsewhere) is a local icon as the support network for returned soldiers, and therefore too sensitive to use as a car name.