Stuart is wearing an AGV helmet, Klim latitude jacket, Klim traverse pants, Held Sambia gloves and Sidi Way Mega Rain boots.

"SUZUKI ENGINEERS DID A LOT OF RESEARCH, INCLUDING CONSULTING CURRENT OWNERS"
Suzuki’s big boy, the DL1000 V-Strom, was introduced back in 2002 and in its first year sold 11,800 units worldwide. Following up with the introduction of the “Wee-Strom” DL650 in 2004, Suzuki had a long distance adventure touring range to satisfy the many riders looking for capability as well as a lower price tag than some of the European competition.

Fast forward to 2013 and near on 200,000 of the 650 and 1000cc V-Stroms have been sold worldwide. The big boy – the DL1000 – really hadn’t changed much from the original model back in 2002, especially visually, making it a bike that desperately needed to be given a lift into the future.

And so 2014 rolls on with Suzuki unveiling the new DL1000 V-Strom to the Australian Press with a ride from Napier over to Palmerston North, on the North Island in New Zealand. Suzuki wanted to show how versatile the new 1000 is in the sorts of conditions most owners would ride. Things like twisty corners, varying bitumen, long open stretches, maintained dirty/gravel roads and even some commuting.

Suzuki engineers did a lot of research, including consulting current owners. Five things were pointed out as crucial for any new bike being designed. It had to be fun to ride, versatile, comfortable, and it had to retain its character and be true to the original V-Strom 1000.

It’s interesting how Suzuki has managed these requirements. The engine has been given a slightly bigger capacity, but the power and torque figures are only just above the previous model’s. This is nowhere more evident than during a back to back blast through some twisty corners, where the old bike has no trouble keeping pace with the new model.

That’s despite the fact that about 90% of the engine is new or revised from the previous model. The main noticeable difference is the addition of the second spark plug. This is for emission control, but also to make the engine a bit smoother. Internally, most of the engine parts have been lightened for smoothness and more controllable power in the low to mid-range. Also, a point worth noting is the change in service intervals. Now at every 12,000km, not
6000km as previous, so ownership costs will be reduced. Good one.

Fuel consumption is claimed to be best in class at 21km/L – or 4.76L/100km. This gives the 1000 a possible (theoretical) range of 420km.

The next obvious change is to the exhaust. Gone are the twin under-seat mufflers, now there is a single, side-exit muffler. This reduces weight for more manoeuvrability and better throttle response.

The six speed gearbox has been redesigned for smoother performance and easier shifts. The ratios have been improved for more comfortable touring, and this was never more evident than cruising along on some straight stretches during the launch. Compared to the previous model, you feel like you have a sixth gear, and are not constantly searching for one.

Suzuki has also added a slipper clutch to the 1000. This gives excellent control under fast down shifting and additionally has given the 1000 an ultralight clutch lever actuation.

Three levels of traction control are featured on the new 1000: Level 1, 2 and Off. Level 2 was a bit too intrusive for my liking, but Level 1 worked well, even on some gravel. It just reduces the power enough to regain control, while not trying to throw you over the handlebar.

Braking has been massively improved over the previous model. The 1000 now features Tokico monoblock calipers with ABS. Although the ABS is not switchable I suspect this will not cause problems for the majority of owners. Even in some deep gravel I never felt like I needed to have the option of turning the ABS off. It is progressive and smooth. On the bitumen there is good progressive levels of power and plenty of feel, and I didn’t have the ABS activating on me, despite some very “spirited” riding.

Styling harks back to the late ’80s DR-Z, DR-BIG and DR800S of 1990. The 1000 has a look of adventure but the beak has created divided opinions. Some like it, some don’t. I say you need to see it in the flesh (metal, plastic, whatever) to get a feel for the entire bike, not just look at pictures on the internet that really only highlight the headlight and beak. From the rider’s seat, the tank is shaped well and the layout of the instrument panel is excellent with plenty of information. Just below it is a 12V power outlet – a great central position that’s easy to get to.

Visually, the 1000 is a much slimmer looking bike than its predecessor and it certainly feels that way while riding.

The screen is one of the best designs on the market. It is manually adjustable up and down in three positions, but the best part is the ratchet system for an additional three outwards positions. So simple to adjust while riding - a simple light push moves it to the next setting, and to bring it back, just push it all the way out and let it come back.

Comfort is good; there is plenty of room from the seat to the pegs and the reach and width to the handlebar is good for most sized riders, with the reach able to be adjusted forward or back, depending on your preference.

**Bring your V-Strom 1000 ABS to life.**
1. Visit the APP Store or Google Play on your smartphone or tablet and search “Suzuki V-Strom 1000 AR” and download it.
2. Open the app and hover your device over this augmented image. 3. Enjoy
Enkei 10-spoke wheels have replaced the familiar V-Strom 3-spoke alloy wheels. They should be much stronger than before and more than adequate for the majority of owners. Bridgestone Battlewing tyres come standard. For any dirt roading, I would change them to something more truly dual purpose. Apart from that, my only concern off road with the 1000 is the long front guard. I think it could trap mud underneath it. Like a lot of dual purpose bikes these days, the He-Strom makes it very hard if not impossible to remove the front guard in muddy conditions, which is a shame.

KYB fully adjustable forks and a refined rear monoshock, along with a 33% more rigid frame completely transform the soft previous model into a bike that handles all conditions well. Turn in is neutral and unless I was carrying a pillion and/or luggage I wouldn’t change the suspension from its standard settings. It gives a good compromise of comfort versus handling.

Accessories are well thought out, and for the first time they’re Suzuki-made. Integrated panniers and topbox, crash bars, hand guards, heated grips, touring screen and mirror extenders, centre stand, LED indicators, sump guard, chain guard, spot lights and fairing decals, along with V-Strom 1000 rim stickers all add up give the 1000 an adventure touring purposeful look.

The new Suzuki V-Strom 1000 has been given a $15,490 (+ORC) price tag. This is sure to see them selling well and Suzuki Australia tell me they are trying to get the majority of accessories (mainly the touring pieces – luggage, guards, screen) so you can buy the 1000 kitted out for sub $20k on the road. This looks to make it one of the best value for money adventure tourers available on the market.

All that is in yellow is what has been changed in the engine.