

HINO demonstrated its latest technology at Hampton Downs



Simon Vincent travelled to Hampton Downs recently to experience the technology Hino is putting into its complete truck range. The day provided an excellent opportunity to review the advances Hino has made. It was also a chance to learn more about the where this manufacturer's technology is heading and what it will offer the industry in the future.

Hino Distributors (NZ) Ltd (HDL) recently invited members of the transport industry to put their products to the test at the Hampton Downs circuit. This was the second opportunity for the industry to experience first-hand the company's latest products and services in a controlled environment following the success of last year's event.

The track day proved to be a fun and informative day where operators got the opportunity to experience Hino's safety features in a controlled environment testing their 300 Series vehicle's stability control (VSC) and traction control on a skid-pan. They were also exposed to the technological advances of Hino's Hybrid technology, the across the board Automated Manual Transmission (AMT) range, and offered the chance to test their skills in a reversing competition with place winners treated to a hot lap in a blazing Ferrari 488GTB courtesy of Continental Car Services.

Hino trucks have been working on the nation's highways and byways for over fifty years now. Their history is one of quiet innovation allied to a reputation for honest performance and excellent reliability. Hino's current truck range spans the market from the light weight 300 Series to the heaviest 700 Series models.

Understanding that their company's success is based on great relationships, on top of providing the best product, means HDL is interested in the continued promotion of their globally recognised brand to local customers.

Keen to ensure their clients were well looked after during the day meant that the entire national sales team were on hand to welcome and liaise with their clients who, in some cases, had come from all over New Zealand. It was the perfect opportunity to show Hino's products at their very best in a relaxed, comfortable and safe environment.

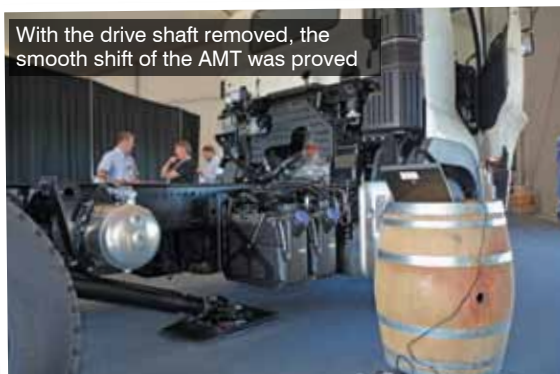
HDL's National Sales Manager, Graham McNabb, was keen to showcase the safety features of the Hino's light-duty trucks. In addition to four-wheel ventilated disc brakes and ABS braking, the 300 Series comes complete with Vehicle Stability Control (VSC) which uses engine power and electronic brake-force distribution to control the vehicle when normal design limits are exceeded. The 300 Series truck in the Hino range is the first on the market to have VSC as standard to provide optimal traction in cornering and stability under braking.

Graham said, "Drivers often don't experience VSC until they need it. Experiencing how our trucks perform in wet conditions with the functions activated, compared to how a conventional truck would behave without these safety features, really puts them in their employees' seat."

Each of the participants got several chances to test the ability of the VCS system in both a narrow and wide cab version of the 300 Series. Riding alongside each of us was an experienced member of the Downforce Auto Events and Training team who guided us through the exercise and ensured our safety. What



Technical Services rep Simon Wilson demonstrating the Proshift 16



With the drive shaft removed, the smooth shift of the AMT was proved



Neil Langford explaining the hybrid drive system



Envirowaste, National Collections Fleet Manager, Tim Dickson behind the wheel



Simon Vincent receiving instruction



Hino acting General Manager, Chris Brown welcomed the attendees



Downforce trainers discussing the skid pan exercise with Fleet Partners, General Manager - Commercial Vehicles, Dean Purves

this showed was that under difficult circumstances, the 300 Series performed as advertised, delivering safe handling under what should be trying conditions. Plenty of effort by the participants saw the trucks pushed to their limits but safely returned to control.

Out on the track, Hino had a selection of trucks on offer, most offering an AMT of some form. This allowed the participants the opportunity to experience these modern marvels in the small, medium and heavy-duty trucks as well as the chance to test out the latest Hino hybrid model.

Technically, Hino was keen to explain the advantages of their Hybrid technology and the Proshift 16 AMT.

The first hybrid model was introduced into New Zealand by Hino in 2006. They were also the first manufacturer to bring a commercial hybrid truck to our market.

Diesel/electric hybrids offer considerable advantages over conventional diesel only powered models but a lack of government incentives to assist with offsetting the price premium are hampering all hybrid suppliers' sales.

Australian experience has demonstrated the value of a 300 Series based hybrid vehicle with several major Australian fleets adopting the advanced technology. Fuel savings alone have been recorded between 14% at TNT (who are operating over 50 trucks) and 21% at supermarket giants Coles. Of course, hybrids have proved to work most efficiently under metro and urban conditions where there are a lot of stop/start cycles.

What hasn't changed is that the technology is highly evolved and well proven with over 15,000 units produced by Hino worldwide so far. What has moved the hybrid forward recently has been the inclusion of a 5 speed AMT transmission in place of the original manual transmission. This change has gone a long way to further improving fuel returns with the truck rather

than the driver making the best gear selection choices for the conditions. Euro 5 engine technology has also helped improve the environment credentials of the hybrid.

In addition to the fuel saving, the hybrid presents significant benefits in environmental terms, lower maintenance costs and a positive image to the world, they say.

For the 700 Series the inclusion of the renowned ZF AS Tronic with Intarder can be nothing but positive. This European transmission has proved itself with many European manufacturers that don't produce their own transmissions.

The twin countershaft design is rated to accept up to 2600Nm and given the engine is producing 2157Nm, there is plenty of excess capacity. The Intarder offers 500 kilowatts of retardation which, when added to with the engine brake, brings the total up to 750kW, or in excess of 1000hp.

Hino has included the ZF AMT to its 700 Series to improve drivability and fuel efficiency. Currently HDL is quoting up to a 5% reduction in fuel burn with the AMT equipped trucks. The ZF transmission offers lightning quick gear changes, to ensure continued momentum even at weights up to 50 tonne under the most challenging conditions New Zealand can offer.

"Purchasing a truck is a significant investment", says Chris Brown, the General Manager of Sime Darby Commercial Group and HDL's Acting General Manager. "Price, application and safety play an important part, but so too does the support we provide to our customers through Truck Stops, our national service network.

"With Truck Stops also involved in the event, we hope that Hino's Hampton Downs Track Day contributes to a full brand experience." **TR**

Driving impressions

Driving the 300 Series on the skid pan proved to be an enlightening and invigorating experience. In the current technological environment, electronic driving aids are being added to vehicles to improve their performance and make them safer, a process we applaud. These aids work extremely well under most circumstances and efforts to test the system on the dry race track proved the effectiveness of the system.

However there is the point where the laws of physics take over even the very best electronic stability aids. During my test drive of the narrow cab variant, I was able to push these limits and cross out of the designated lane into the adjacent one, not once but twice. It was possible to achieve a similar result in the wide cab variant too. I believe I was the only person to achieve this on the day which seemed to impress the tutor.

This proved that whilst the system activated as advertised, in extreme circumstances the electronics can be slowed or defeated and common sense driving is still required. As soon as the vehicle slowed sufficiently the system regained full control and we were able to safely complete the manoeuvre. At no stage were the vehicle or the occupants in any danger and during normal driving conditions if an accident was imminent, a driver is unlikely to hold the accelerator down (as I had) but would likely brake.

I also had turns behind the wheel of a 500 Series with the Proshift 6 and a 700 Series Proshift 16. Both trucks provided very lively performances on the track which would be expected in cab and chassis configuration. The shift quality on both is extremely good and use of both is both intuitive and simple. Handling and braking were as expected, again aided by the fact that there was no weight on the vehicles.



The skid pan testing highlighted the value of Hino's VCS



Truck Stops up the ante

Truck Stops were on hand to explain some of the changes that have been occurring around its service and support. The parts and service supplier has adopted the Japanese inspired Kaizen principles of constant improvement.

The results of this approach has seen Truck Stops offering Hino customers a new range of service including fixed price servicing (for A, B and C services), Hino filtration packages, exchange brake packs, service ready transmissions and complete clutch kits.

To achieve what seems straight forward solutions has required considerable background preparation with complete new ranges of packaging, and clever delivery systems backing the whole process up.

These new service products are allowing cost conscious Hino operators, who traditionally have not been enthusiastic adopters of such products as contract maintenance, to have access to a range of products and services which deliver outstanding value for money, convenience and competitive price. The support they are now receiving is similar to operators of premium products who opt for full service contract maintenance and this is doing a lot to maximise value to operators.

