

TESTED

# SAFETY FIRST

HINO'S 300 SERIES TAKES A STEP UP WITH MORE POWER AND PERFORMANCE THAN ITS COMPETITION.

**Does** safety sell? That's the question the Hino Australia marketing people have to determine as they shape their campaigns around the latest additions to the Hino 300 Series, which is billed as the safest light truck on the market.

But that's not all this Japanese truck maker has to offer. As well as providing the highest level of inbuilt safety systems available on a light to medium truck, Hino has added an engine capacity increase of 25 percent that brings with it higher levels of power and torque than any of the competition.

Now, perhaps it's the combination of safety, power and performance that's got your attention, or any combination of the three. Either way, Hino is hoping that the latest upgrades will kick start more momentum in the light to medium truck market, echoing the growth rate currently applicable to the heavy end of the truck market.

There are now around 150 different Hino models marketed in Australia, and the latest improvements to the 300 Series adds a total of eight new models in what Hino calls its High Horsepower range.

The arrival of the new high horsepower 300 Series heralds the first time manufacturers competing in this segment have broken the 200 hp barrier. And these trucks have not only broken the barrier on power and performance, they've added to the insult aimed at their competitors by including an excellent six-speed fully-fluid Aisin automatic transmission into the equation.

We'll start with details surrounding the four-cylinder, 5.1-litre, Hino J05E turbocharged and intercooled diesel, and the confirmation that this new engine to the Australian market produces 205 hp (151 kW) with a peak torque rating of 600 Nm.

This overhead camshaft engine with four valves per cylinder has common-rail fuel injection, a variable-nozzle turbocharger and a diesel particulate active reduction filter (DPR). It does not require the addition of AdBlue (DEF) to meet Euro 5 emissions legislation. To accommodate



the larger engine, the frame width has been increased over the 4.0-litre engine version from 740 mm to 840 mm.

You can pick the driveline, which offers a six-speed synchromesh manual gearbox or the six-speed Aisin auto, but our suggestion is to head straight for the automatic, and here's why.

The six-speed manual gearbox imposes power and torque limitations when teamed with the new 5.1-litre engine that for the sake of durability requires limiting the maximum power output to 189 hp and peak torque to 510 Nm. This is a fact of life that results from Hino, even with its access to all things Toyota, not having a suitably rated manual gearbox to take the full 600 Nm of torque output.

The six-speed Aisin auto doesn't impose the same torque input limitations on the engine rating, hence the higher output. It's a double overdrive transmission where 5th and 6th ratios are both overdriven, and this contributes to a low 2,220-rpm cruise ability at a constant 100 km/h.

Before making your purchase decision of manual versus automatic purely on the grounds of initial cost, pause for a moment and think of whole-of-life costs and driver acceptance.

Supposing the automatic 'box adds around \$3,000 to the initial vehicle cost, over time you will not be contemplating clutch replacement, the associated vehicle



**Hino has to convince its customers that safety is a first consideration in purchase selection. This should be a prime factor in the decision making of any company operating light trucks. With ABS and vehicle stability control coupled with disc brakes the Hino 300 Series is an imposing package.**

downtime while in the workshop, and vehicle hire as a replacement if your work schedule is hectic. The driver benefiting from the automatic will be less stressed through not changing gears manually, and will also be appreciating the additional 90 Nm of torque – the difference on a hill climb can amount to yet another gear swap and an increase in fuel use.

So, with that self-imposed broader view on your vehicle selection, what's the new high horsepower Hino like in the road?



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**High horsepower and strong torque delivery when coupled with the six-speed Aisin automatic transmission reduce driver fatigue and improve the daily life of a driver in a typical PUD fleet or for those involved in truck rental.**

The 300 Series cabin is typically similar in appearance to all Japanese cabovers, with easy access for the driver and passengers and offering better than average visibility. Thanks to the use of high tensile steel in the windscreen A-pillars, and bonded windscreen glass to add strength, the A-pillars are much slimmer than with other products. Slim pillars mean less visual obstruction of cyclists and pedestrians and a safer outcome, especially when in congested areas.

There's a noticeable difference in performance between the manual and automatic transmission versions, and it's the automatic that wins the day for its ease of operation.

The drive programme at the preview of the new range included a run from Sydney CBD through to Bathurst, with plenty of steep climbs through to Mount Victoria. Hill climbing ability was certainly up the mark, even with a full 4,000 kg payload, and by manually selecting a lower ratio and clicking on the exhaust brake it was possible to control descent speeds accurately, without running the risk of over speeding.

The driver's seat has a suspension system that works well, even considering the very limited amount of space under the seat. Matched in with the reach, height and rake adjustment of the steering column, it's easy to find a perfect compromise for virtually any size and shape of driver.

The in-cab multimedia style of unit now finding their way into light trucks is also a boon, especially when spending all day running around a delivery route. The unit fitted to the test vehicles provided the option of linking to a maximum of three external cameras and featured a 6.1-inch touch screen that controlled the inbuilt navigation mapping.

The range of eight new high horsepower vehicles in the 300 Series includes all the safety features currently included in the 4.0-litre versions, which remain on the market.

These safety features relate to cab crash test conformation, seat belt pre-tensioners, reinforced door beams, driver and passenger SRS airbags, vehicle stability control, four-wheel ventilated disc brakes, anti-lock braking and electronic brake force distribution, heated and powered rear vision mirrors, and reverse and blind spot cameras linked to the multimedia unit.

Where a fleet operator or rental company requires a vehicle to be maximum-speed limited, the dealership can invoke an upper speed limit that cannot be overridden by the driver. Hino also offers a hill-start control system on manual and hybrid models that pressurises the vehicle braking system momentarily when the driver removes their foot from the brake pedal, prior to moving off.

Hino is the only manufacturer offering vehicle stability control (VSC), and this, combined with disc brakes and ABS, is a major benefit to any fleet where driver training and proficiency cannot be guaranteed, as with rental operations.

From a weight and driver perspective the high horsepower models start with a standard GVM of 8,500 kg with a 12,000 GCM, and this weight range is for drivers holding a medium rigid licence. It can be down rated and plated at 7,995 kg for operators that pay their drivers by the licence type, as with light rigid licence holders.

A further option is to plate at 4,495 kg in cases where payload is not the criteria, suiting the requirements of fifth-wheel applications such as towing a gooseneck horse float or motorhome.

The high horsepower 300 Series is available in wheelbase alternatives of 3,500 mm for a 4.5-metre body, and 3,800 mm and 4,400 mm in single and crew-cab versions, both available in manual and auto. The top of the frame is rivet free, making it easier for bodybuilders, and there are long-range fuel tanks available, adding a further 70 litres to the standard 100-litre capacity.

So, will the Hino high horsepower models bring additional interest and increased sales to the brand? We reckon it's pretty much a no-brainer. 