

TURNING UP ACES

WITH EIGHT DISTINCT MODELS IN THE HINO 300 SERIES, THE READY TO WORK TRADE ACE EMPHASISES SAFETY, COMFORT AND OPTIMAL UTILITY. Story by Peter Shields

Despite its 'trade' moniker, the Hino 300 series Trade Ace is a trump card in the pack, accommodating a diverse range of practical applications including local government jobs and power utility projects. For our test drive, a tonne of ballast had been placed almost directly over the back axle, simulating a typical Trade Ace load.

The test truck is a 4,495kg Gross

Vehicle Mass (GVM) 616 model with the wide cab, so it has the full alloy bull bar and a beam axle on leaf springs at the front. The bull bar is compatible with the cab's airbags and there is a sticker to remind the operator to tilt the bar before attempting to tilt the cab.

The smaller narrow cab models have coil independent front suspension and get a polished nudge bar. Drivers holding

light rigid licences and above can opt for a 5,500kg GVM version. and our passenger-licence-friendly version has a payload of around 1,500kg. The alloy tray is 4.5m long and 2.1m wide with dual removable drop sides, featuring access steps with non-slip treads. The triple alloy ladder/pipe racks



are rated at a combined 350kg and have an expanded mesh headboard at the front to protect the cab's rear window. Solid tie down rails are located all around the tray and the additional tent style reinforced vinyl tonneau cover provides easy access to the load space. Hino has upgraded the seating in the 300 Series in recent years. The driver's seat in the wide cab is suspended on torsion bars with electro-magnetic dampening which can be adjusted. The transmission is a double overdrive full automatic from Allison while the four-litre engine delivers 110kW (150PS) and 420Nm of torque. Wide cab manuals have increased ratings of 121kW and 464Nm. Emissions are handled by exhaust gas recirculation combined with a diesel particulate filter.

Dual fuel tanks located on the driver's side of the chassis providing a combined 170-litre capacity. Fifth and sixth gear in the auto are overdrive for better fuel economy.

On descents with the exhaust brake activated, the transmission initiates downshifts without over-revving the engine to provide optimum engine braking by way of utilising the engine's compression as well as back-pressure on the exhaust brake. The four-wheel anti-lock disc brakes are superb.



The chassis incorporates a Front Under-run Protection (FUP) bar, offering additional protection to steering components as well as being an added safety feature for the driver and other road users.

Vehicle stability control is standard as is cruise control, which is operated via a wand that turns with the steering wheel rather than being directly mounted to the column, such as the lights, wiper and exhaust brake controls. The traction control can be de-activated by a dash

switch if the circumstances require more driver input.

The dash has analogue speedo and tacho instruments with digital fuel and temperature gauges as well as readouts for current and average fuel consumption.

The familiar AV unit has digital, AM/FM radio, CD entertainment and the Bluetooth connection is very easy to connect to. There are several storage tray sections on the console beside the driver that are suitable locations for phones, pens and business cards. The AV unit screen also serves as the monitor for the standard reversing camera and has the capacity for the installation of another two cameras.

On the road, the Trade Ace is as easy to handle as a typical ute, so Hino pitched this light truck as an alternative. Driver and passenger comfort is ideal, with plenty of space, effective air conditioning and electric windows. The automatic function on the driver's window works as a one-touch to both raise and lower the glass so that the driver's hand isn't off the wheel for more than a moment. Safety features include airbags and seat belt warning lights and mirrors that have electric adjustment as well as heating. All combined, the Trade Ace is winning play for many applications. (M)

