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gradual rise of Hino trucks into the Australian market has been interesting, given that it's been a relatively slow process to gain market share. If anything, the development of the Hino range in our market shows that success does not come overnight, especially with trucks,

something that the Chinese manufacturers might well bear in mind as they target Australia and New Zealand.

Backed by the technology and infrastructure available from its parent company, Toyota, the Hino brand was probably better known in its earlier days some 25 years ago for its bus chassis, regularly enabling the company to claim market leadership of the Australian private bus sector. This was also where development work began on hybrid drive systems, with the Hino HIMR actively running in Japanese bus fleets well before anyone thought about applying the technology to the passenger car market.

The HIMR project centred on the first large diesel/electric hybrid bus in the world to use an inverter-controlled motor generator to reduce fuel consumption and pollution. The principal of HIMR (Hybrid Inverter-controlled Motor and Retarder) is similar to that of Toyota's Prius and Camry

hybrids, converting the energy of vehicle deceleration into electrical energy and storing it in batteries. During acceleration, the electric motor assists the diesel engine, thereby reducing smoke and other emissions.

That principle is slightly different these days, as when compared with the latest Hino hybrid drives the electric motor actually powers the truck away from stationary, with the diesel then kicking in subsequently. The use of the electric motor to move the truck away from rest substantially extends clutch life in real world applications. Electric drive assistance is also a great benefit where the terrain is very hilly, as acceleration is much superior to a diesel-only engine drivetrain.

Hybrid technology and CNG, LNG or Bio-Fuel acceptance would be greatly influenced if Government adopted a supportive stance, providing incentives for its adoption in line with those available in Europe. As long as that option remains off the Federal Government agenda the Australian market will be buying diesel. With new high performance power offerings, Hino is hoping that its latest carrot provides enough incentive for the company to substantially increase its market share.

As Hino's Chairman and CEO, Steve Lotter, told *PowerTorque Magazine*, the release of the latest Hino 300 Series high horsepower models is part of a plan to top out the year with upwards of 150 different chassis derivatives of the range available on the Australian market.



“As well as announcing eight new high horsepower 300 series models we are adding ten further models in the medium-duty range as we progress through the year,” said Mr. Lotter.

“Considering the total truck market is around 25,000 units per year, the plethora of trucks available is incredible. We are working to plug the gaps in the range to cover all requirements.

“Throughout 2013, Isuzu was the market leader with Hino second in the market for 4x2. We see the new 300-Series high horsepower truck in the 6.5 tonnes to 9.5 tonnes GVM weight range as being ideal for customers looking for the 3 to 4-tonne payload capability.

“If we analyse the 8 to 9-tonne GVM from 2008-2013 its anywhere from 700 to 1000 trucks. This segment looks as though it will improve in 2014.

“In 2016 we believe the market share target will be looking at 45 percent for Isuzu, with Hino at 35 percent and Fuso down to 20 percent. We are looking to take from both competitors in this segment.

“We have faith in this vehicle and the doors it can open. As a result of consolidating our product offering, Hino can now offer the highest performance levels less than 10.4 tonnes GVM, with eight percent more power and 18 percent more torque than the nearest competitor.



Senior executives from Hino outlined the benefits of the latest high horsepower 300 Series with Bill Gillespie Divisional Manager Brand and Franchise Development (top), Steve Lotter CEO and Chairman (centre) and Daniel Petrovsky Product Strategy Manager (left).

ON A MISSION

HINO IS CLEAR IT WANTS A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN MARKET SHARE



High safety levels and the most powerful engine range available in light trucks of this weight category combine with the option of a torque converter full automatic transmission to provide a best in class scenario. The added cost of an automatic transmission could easily be justified by reduced maintenance through not having to consider clutch replacements through the vehicle's whole of life costs.

"The 300 Series can be registered for car, light-duty or medium-duty truck licence holders, and we can offer more wheelbase options with higher safety levels, disc brakes and better gradeability. These are benefits that we believe will set it apart in the customers' eyes.

"We know we have a great product and now it's a case of getting it out to the market. Replacement cycles have started to kick in as we can see from the Class 8 market, but we have yet to see this in the lower weight ranges. The light-duty market has declined by almost 30 percent since the onset of the GFC. If the market is not growing now, we can compete in this segment and believe we can capture sales from our competitors.

"The whole range offers the highest level of safety features of any manufacturer. Vehicle Stability Control (VSC) in its own right is a significant safety feature and is mandatory on cars. It surprises us that this feature is not perhaps key in purchasing requirements. If it were mandatory, we are the only ones with it.

"The car market is pretty much fully automatic when it comes to transmissions, and the truck market is heading that way. Looking ahead, as development is confirmed for building roads, airports and infrastructure, it has to be good for trucks generally. Getting the range correct is very important. If you haven't got the product you can't sell it, it's that simple," said Mr. Lotter.

Daniel Petrovski, Hino's Manager – Product Strategy, told *PowerTorque Magazine* that the release of the new Hino high horsepower 300 Series models enabled the company to be competitive in a new segment of 800 trucks in that weight category, and with superior power and performance, where previously it had not been able to compete.

"We've been waiting for these higher horsepower derivatives since we launched the 300 Series back in 2011," said Daniel.

"In mid-year we will launch a new 700 Series 8x4 with leaf suspension and AMT driveline targeted at off-road applications such as for mobile cranes, where the alternative option of a Hendrickson air suspension is not ideal for those types of operating conditions.

"We will also be launching our FE automatic rated at 14 tonnes GVM with an Allison 2500 Series. This is configured in short-wheelbase form and targeted at street sweeper applications.

"Two new 300 Series variants will also join the market in August, with a 3.0-tonner auto crew-cab targeted at councils and municipal work.



"At the same time we will be adding an 816 Long, with automatic transmission, a 3870 mm wheelbase and a GVM of 7.3 tonnes for van body type applications such as preferred by courier and PUD fleets (Pick-up and Delivery). It is these types of city-based applications where an automatic transmission is best suited.

"This will be followed by an FC model with a Pro Shift AMT rated at 10.4 tonnes and an FD Medium and Extra Long chassis with an 11.0-tonne GVM featuring an AMT.

"Finally, for specific applications such as a 12-pallet tray or curtainsider, we are adding a GH Extra Long model with automatic transmission and a 6,200 mm wheelbase.

"This is a very versatile chassis that is equally at home being converted to a 6x2 for 12-pallet application, where weights are higher or to gain from the versatility of carrying 14-pallets with a lazy axle conversion either as a tag-axle or as a pusher-axle location," added Daniel. 