

DAF introduces new Aussie models

DAF Trucks Australia says its new LF and CF model range is the culmination of almost a decade of research and development, including comprehensive consultation with the trucking industry and customising solutions to suit Australia's demanding applications.

DAF Trucks Australia general manager Brad Wolstenholme said each new model delivered enhanced performance and increased driver comfort and safety. "The LF series sets high standards in productivity and driveability for metropolitan and regional distribution, from 12 to 21.5 tonnes gross vehicle mass," he said.

The LF series has a new multi-function steering wheel and revised dash layout. The new PACCAR 6.7-litre GR engine replaces a 5.8-litre engine, providing around 20% more torque for maximum pulling power and flexibility.

The air-cooled, six-cylinder, turbo-charged engine features electronically-controlled, high-pressure common rail fuel injection, with four valves per cylinder and cross-flow cylinder

head, developing power ratings from 220-280 hp in a flat torque curve.

In addition to the six-speed ZF manual transmission, DAF has introduced the nine-speed Eaton manual and the new ZF six-speed AS-Tronic automated manual version.

Wolstenholme said the CF series provided premium comfort and performance for a variety of medium to heavy-duty applications. The CF75 is available in a wide range of configurations, including 4x2, 6x2, 6x4 and 8x4 rigid chassis and as a 4x2 prime mover.

The flagship CF85, which can handle heavy-duty distribution up to 30 tonnes gross vehicle mass, is available as 6x4 and 8x4 rigid and 4x2 and 6x4 prime mover.

The CF75's new 9.2-litre PACCAR PR engine is an inline, six-cylinder power plant, providing increased performance, reduced emissions and low fuel consumption. It is available in 250, 310 and 360hp variants, producing flat torque of 1050, 1275 and 1450Nm respectively.

The top-of-the-range CF85 has the new 12.9-litre PACCAR MX engine, a compact six-cylinder with low weight, high performance and quiet operation. With four valves per cylinder, the MX engine comes in 360, 410 and 460hp variants, delivering flat torque of 1775, 2000 and 2300Nm respectively. Both models come with a choice of transmissions.

Wolstenholme said with the new model line-up, DAF continued to add another dimension to Australian transport, providing a quality European alternative that complements Australia's iconic Kenworth brand.

"DAF has reached a new level of sophistication," he said. "Our model range is widely regarded as the best-engineered European truck range available. All DAF models are fully supported, before and after sale, by PACCAR Australia and the country's best dealer network."

Meanwhile, DAF trucks are making inroads in north Queensland's burgeoning coal mining industry, traditionally the preserve of American-style trucks for equipment haulage and Japanese vehicles for lighter trucks.

A growing number of niche operators are choosing European-engineered DAFs for both duties, and Mackay-based R&J Tilt Tray Truck Hire is leading the way. Founded in 1996 by Russ and Judy Elgar, the company started with a single tilt tray truck and has expanded to a fleet of 14. It handles a variety of work for the mines – everything from the delivery and disposal of parts and machinery to hauling 40-foot portable sheds, containers and boom-lifts.

Over the years, R&J has used various American and Japanese models, but that all changed with the purchase of its first DAF truck – a bogey-drive CF85 – in 2000. Russ and Judy's son, Doug Elgar, was given the DAF tandem drive and was immediately sold on its performance, reliability and comfort. So much so, R&J committed to replacing its entire fleet with DAFs.

The founders have since handed the reins to their children – Doug and Vivian – and over the past seven years the business has progressively replaced its vehicles with a variety of DAF CF75 and CF85 rigids and prime movers.

"I've looked at DAF from both sides of the



The new DAF LF55 E15 4x2 rigid.



One of R&J Tilt Tray Truck Hire's growing fleet of DAF CFs.

coin – as a driver and now as a manager – and the view is the same," Doug Elgar said. "DAFs are the best trucks for this business. They have

enhanced our business with lower operating costs, improved reliability and driver comfort, and they've also enabled us to gain more

business with high performance trucks that can handle a wider range of tasks."

R&J is Queensland's largest fleet owner of DAF Trucks outside of Brisbane and they've started a trend with mining operators in the region. There are now a number of DAFs working the mines in the Bowen Basin and more are coming online each month. In fact, R&J has just taken possession of two more CF75s. One is a stock, single-drive tilt tray, and the other includes a lift-up axle for specialist applications.

Elgar said the CF75 and 85s were ideal for onsite haulage, providing not only high maneuverability and excellent fuel efficiency but also versatility. After working with numerous makes, Elgar said DAFs have also proved to be far more reliable and durable than any other brand he's used, and surprisingly cheaper to operate and maintain than the Japanese trucks they've replaced.

"Some other brands may be cheaper to buy, but they don't last the distance and [they] end up costing more in repairs and maintenance," he said. "Also, they don't give the driver the same degree of comfort. In our business, you don't travel a lot of kilometres, but you do spend a lot of hours behind the wheel and that's why our drivers love DAF."

"The trucks are comfortable and a joy to drive. That's an important consideration these days. If you want to attract and keep good drivers, you have to give them good trucks." **C**