

# The Thirst For POWER

We are always asking for just a little bit more power in our trucks. Well, DAF has heard our pleas and upped the power available in its CF 85 prime mover. Diesel Editor **Tim Giles** drives the flexible compact prime mover with the new 510hp power plant.

Quite often, the art of designing a new truck is not designing and building something from the ground up, but instead mixing and matching the components available in a different way to solve a particular application issue. There are plenty of models developed in such a way running on our roads already, and now there's another – the DAF CF85 with a 510hp PACCAR MX engine.

The DAF CF85 has been the most popular of the DAF models brought into Australia over the past 20 years by PACCAR. It is also successful for the company in Europe. The size and shape of the truck fit neatly into a lot of intrastate or around-town type applications. The truck is simple to drive, climb in and out of, manoeuvre into tight corners – and it doesn't look bad at all.

If there has been one criticism levelled at the DAF range, it is the lack of high-power ratings at the top of the range. This fact has stifled sales of the bigger X105 prime mover, which is fitted with the Paccar MX375 engine rated at 510hp – not really enough for a top-end prime mover in the modern trucking industry.

Similarly, sales of the CF85 were limited due to the fact that the biggest engine fitted was also the PACCAR MX, but rated at 462hp – insufficient for operators who wanted a flexible truck in the fleet to handle most situations. DAF here in Australia has now stepped up to the plate and introduced the more powerful 510hp MX variation into the CF range.

The CF model has been available in Australia for a good while, and the engine is performing well in both DAF and Kenworth chassis installations. Operators using the CF must have started asking for a bit more power, while those running the larger DAF XF105 requested a smaller, lighter cab.

It may seem surprising that this configuration hadn't been thought of before, but even more astonishing is how quickly DAF was able to turn the idea into a project, and then into a truck in the market – about nine months.

In fact, the process proved to be

less arduous than it could have been. All of the components involved have been available in the Australian market for some time and have proven their durability in our conditions. There was no re-engineering required as all of the pieces of the jigsaw were designed to fit together.

The only question mark remaining was the efficacy of the combination of the smaller lower cab with the 510hp engine's cooling system. This was easily assessed – a CF model was built with the 510hp engine and put on the roads of Australia, as a test bed for the concept. Unsurprisingly, the cooling system handled the task with alacrity and the CF 85 510 became a reality.

#### NOT TOO FLASHY

The DAF CF85 is one of those trucks that just work, nothing too flashy, it gets the job done without fuss. This is why we see it in fleets around the country handling the day-to-day tasks. There is no hint of glamour, just a can-do attitude. Anyone who has done a day's work in one will have found it a truck which functions as it should in an uncomplicated way.

By adding in an extra slice of power and taking the rating up to 510hp, DAF has simply made it able to handle heavier tasks. There has been an ongoing tendency for trucks to get more





power year on year – there is now a 4x2 rigid available on the Australian market with 350hp under the shed, so the decision to add 510hp to the CF 85 seems small beer by comparison.

What this change does accomplish is it enables a smallish, low-tare truck to run around pulling fully loaded B-doubles all day with comparative ease. The industry doesn't think 460hp is enough to haul B-doubles any more, and DAF has moved to meet the market.

#### SOME OOMPH

So, finally, the CF 85 has got a bit of oomph. Diesel was champing at the bit to get a go in the truck with the new engine. The CF has long been a favourite due to its simplicity and ease of use and the comfortable, no-fuss design inside.

The test run took the truck and a loaded single trailer out on the hilliest road leaving Melbourne – the Western Freeway, heading to Ballarat and back into the city. But first, the truck needed to be tested in its natural environment, the industrial estates and transport depot hub around Laverton, Altona, Derrimut and Sunshine.

Taking the truck out on the road demonstrates the real strength of this design decision. The truck is a

genuinely smooth performer – coupling a 510hp engine with a 16-speed ZF AS Tronic AMT makes for seamless, fast changes up through the ratios, accompanied by a gentle murmur from the engine compartment.

This is where the truck's strengths lie. The driver is low down and can see all around the truck – this all-round visibility is vital in this area, as trucks seem to appear from everywhere. Being in a lower cabin also means it is more difficult for the cars darting by to get lost from view.

The other strength of this truck that comes into play in an area like this is the automated manual transmission (AMT). Travelling through industrial zones means constant stop and go – if it isn't the traffic lights against you, it's a queue at each and every one of the countless roundabouts. The AS Tronic was designed for just this type of situation – simply set the gearbox to drive and it will do the rest. Gentle pressure on the accelerator makes for a smooth and seamless journey up and down the ratios as the traffic stops and then gets going again.

When a bit more oomph is needed, the driver can simply push harder on

the pedal to get the kick down – and the 510hp (375kW) and 2,500Nm (1850 ft lb) of torque come into play.

#### SMOOTH RIDE

The driver position is just right, far enough forward to make every area around the truck visible, while all controls remain easily accessible. There's even a small under-bunk fridge accessible to the left hand from the driver's seat.

The ride itself is as one would expect from a truck that has performed well in Europe and is being brought into Australia by an organisation that has engineered a good ride into the Kenworth range. This truck sits down well on the road and gives the rider just enough feedback and plenty of comfort.

Of course, the sheer size of the cabin does come with some restrictions. The high engine cover makes getting out of the seat and accessing the rear bunk a bit of an exercise – the roof feels low when trying to move about in the cabin and, while there is storage space under the bunk and overhead, there's not a lot.

The cabin design gives the truck some advantages, mainly a tare mass 480kg below that of the bigger, bulkier XF 105 at the top of DAF's range. There you have it, a truck with a big enough heart to pull a B-double, but capable of an increase in payload closing in on half a tonne.

It is possible to see this truck as a tipper and dog with a four- or five-axle trailer, also as a fuel tanker with a 19-metre B-double in the local servo, or perhaps delivering full loads of steel around sites in regional areas. The flexibility of its size, tare and power make it one of those trucks that will fit the bill in a large number of applications.

#### PLAYING WITH THE BUTTONS

Heading out onto the highway in a modern truck gives this driver an opportunity to just play with the buttons – it's often the only way to find out what they do. One of the first buttons pushed activates the hill-start aid, to stop the truck from rolling back at the countless traffic lights in the Sunshine/Altona area.

Next we have the array of six buttons on the steering wheel – two on the left



control the Bluetooth-connected phone and another sets descent speed using the engine brake. Three on the right are for cruise control and prove to be simple to use. On the top of the driver's door, five buttons control windows, mirrors and central locking.

One of DAF's great ideas, at an early stage, was the controller for the data screen and system. It has remained

unchanged in the DAF product for over 15 years and has now migrated across to the latest Kenworths here in Australia. The driver can control what is shown on the small LCD screen in front of them by using a round knob on the dash to their left.

The interface is simple and straightforward, and there are no complex menus – just clear, concise

lettering in a large font. The transmission controller is similarly unfussy, simply a dial that can be twisted to move from neutral to drive, reverse, and so on.

This is not a glamorous truck – if you want pizzazz, go elsewhere, that is not what a DAF CF 85 is all about. However, if you want something to do the job with a certain amount of ease and comfort, then it is certainly worth a look. **ID**

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