



THE POWER OF ONE

After four decades in road transport, Kevin Bakewell acquired his first DAF truck. This investment on one CF85 delivered on all its hype and led to another DAF purchase a few months later.

Kevin Bakewell was an owner-driver until he fell from a semi-trailer and injured his knee in 1997. Given the severe pain following the accident, he struggled to sleep, leading to fatigue issues. Kevin was faced with the dilemma to get out of the road transport industry or find other means to cultivate his business.

Kevin's desire to own trucks won over, so he employed his first driver. That decision gave him extra time to plan his presence as a bigger player in the Manning Valley transport game, and in 1998 he bought a second truck. Kevin now owns 27 trucks to perform the professional tasks of carting general and refrigerated freight for his family-run business with 36 staff, Bakewell Haulage.

Delivering via 24-pallet single trailers, Bakewell Haulage holds an assortment of goods at three warehouses located in Taree, Sydney, and has their head office located at Wingham in New South Wales.

"We service the Taree beer distribution for Tooheys and Carlton United Breweries throughout the Mid North Coast," says Kevin Bakewell, director and partner of Bakewell Haulage.

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“The beer distribution is separate to our own warehousing and distribution operation. We’ve generally got ten semi-trailers in Sydney every day, one in Melbourne most days and two in Brisbane.”

Kevin began warehousing in 2000, recognizing growth in the Port Macquarie area, which is central to the Mid North Coast region. Essential warehouses in Sydney services Bakewell’s smaller clients, and the Wingham depot keeps up with Australia’s fastest-growing regional population from Kempsey in the north to Forster in the south and every township in between.

“When we first started business I used to run to Sydney from Taree three times a week and alternatively twice the next week. Our trucks are now able to do that trip in one day due to efficiencies in the transport industry, ease of motorways, as well as more horsepower and driver comfort found in today’s trucks.”

The Sydney to Taree coastal route is Bakewell’s main path for many of their customers. Halfway between these destinations sits one of Australia’s leading heavy-duty truck dealers, Gilbert & Roach Kenworth DAF Newcastle.

Gilbert & Roach also happens to be one of the largest dealerships in New South Wales, located on a 3.77 hectare site, and situated two minutes’ drive from the main motorway.

Kevin has been a loyal customer of Gilbert & Roach since the 1990’s for many reasons, be it the slick service and parts supply, or his absolute faith in the PACCAR product.

“The hours they’re open is brilliant for us,” he notes. “If needed, we can swing a truck in the dealership on the way home from Sydney at 7pm and they’re still open. I couldn’t see myself buying a Kenworth or a DAF anywhere else. I’ve got a brilliant relationship with them.”

Troy Ridley, sales representative at Gilbert & Roach, has been helping Kevin with the expansion of his fleet, and in November 2017 he facilitated a sale for Kevin’s very first DAF Truck.

“I was lucky enough to be introduced to Kevin in 2004, and from 2005 onwards I’ve been looking after him,” Troy says. “He’s averaged a Kenworth off me every year for as long as I can remember, and then started looking at the DAF model range as an extension of the PACCAR offering. His first DAF purchase was based on fuel economy results that we spruiked to Kevin, which got his eyes to open up.”

According to Kevin, he had been looking closely at the CF85 for the company’s daily distribution run from Taree to Sydney.

“I looked at DAF Trucks as a good alternative to the other truck brands that we run on that trip. The 85 has been back to the dealer only once for a brake adjustment, and apart from servicing, we haven’t needed to put a spanner on it. It does a job for K-Mart and we are getting about 2.5km a litre and we are very happy with that.”

The 510hp PACCAR MX-13 engine is pulling a 48-foot tautliner which registers reasonable weights every day. The sleeper cab, combined with airbag suspension, air horns and Combi lights, is elegantly refined with a wooden dashboard, soft grip steering wheel and a lower bunk, which is raised slightly to provide room for a refrigerator below.

Prior to 2017, Kevin didn’t have the DAF product on his radar. Just a year or two later, much has changed on many levels. The short wheelbase with its excellent turning circle to get in and out of tight places, as well as other functionality aspects for linehaul operation, have challenged any preconceptions Kevin had.

“The CF85 rides like a motorcar,” Kevin declares. “It has an automated transmission, it has brilliant vision with a lot of glass and good mirrors, and I’ve got a driver in it who is gaining experience; making it a great vehicle for that person to learn in.

It surprised me comfort-wise, surprised me vision-wise and the turning circle is second-to-none. It’s definitely met my expectations and exceeded them with fuel-savings to a certain degree,” Kevin admits.

With the rig proving to be efficient and sturdy, and a valuable way to save on fuel, Kevin has just placed another order for his second DAF – a 360hp FAD CF75. The 8x4 model, fitted with a tautliner body and tail lifter, will transport beer and cement products throughout Kempsey, Newcastle and Gloucester.

Keeping pace with Kevin's business are the team at Gilbert & Roach Kenworth DAF Newcastle. "I can't speak highly enough of them," says Kevin. "I enjoy the fact that I can trust the people I deal with. They've never sold me something I don't need and they take the time to know your business and know the vehicle you need."

Kevin talked up the growth of beer sales in the area; with a 26-year history with Tooheys Breweries, Kevin is expecting a steady profit from this industry. Even though Bakewell Haulage is slowing down its own company growth, Kevin is confidently betting on the future with an 8-wheeler DAF.

"I don't want to grow for the sake of growing. It's about keeping things under control. We are trying to keep growth to 2% a year (one truck and two trailers) but I'm still not sure if that's going to be possible with the growing markets we service," he says with a wry smile.

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PACCAR Australia is a subsidiary of PACCAR Inc., and designs, engineers and manufactures Kenworth trucks to meet the world's toughest applications throughout Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. PACCAR Australia comprises of Kenworth Trucks, DAF Trucks, PACCAR Parts, PACCAR Financial and PacLease.

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