

DAF CF85 510 Operator Review



When your regular daily route tackles the steep remote west coast of Tasmania, there are a couple of things you need in a truck; plenty of power, good reliability and sound back-up service which is what this operator is getting from his new DAF CF85

Smithton is the commercial centre for the thriving agricultural industry of the North West Coast region as well as the beginning of the spectacular Tarkine Wilderness. The surrounding area boasts lush rich green fields fed by rains from the roaring forties.

Owner of Arnold's Transport, Andrew Arnold, says Smithton and the surrounding communities are prosperous with diverse industries from agriculture through to forestry. Consequently, demand on fuel usage is high in the area, which keeps the Arnolds' tankers busy.

Andrew told us that the decision to include DAF trucks in his fleet a few years back was something he deliberated on for some time with careful consideration placed on a number of key aspects.

"The trucks that would take us forward needed to tick a number of boxes for us," Andrew said. "Firstly, I wanted to support an Australian manufacturer with strong local Tasmanian dealership support and we found that with PACCAR and CJD Equipment."

"Flexibility to operate in tight farm environments with the capability to comfortably run to the other end of the state when required was an aspect we'd hope to achieve, basically be good in off-highway situations with economical on-highway characteristics.

driven by quality

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“We are also very mindful of the environment we work in and wanted a truck that was quiet in operation as we are often required to work within towns after hours,” Andrew continued. “Creating and maintaining good public perception is very important not just for our business but for the transport industry in general.

“Another important aspect is safety,” Andrew added. “I have two young drivers working for our company and their safety is paramount. The DAF CF 85 certainly ticked this box too.”

“Finally the truck needed to be reliable with good economy.

“We settled on a DAF CF85 460, with the 12-speed transmission,” Andrew said. “We’ve been more than happy with its performance and extremely pleased with the fuel economy of it. We average 2.4km/litre on stop-start farm work and 2.5-2.6km/litre on highway work. These results were better than we expected especially when you take into consideration the PTO pumping time for farm deliveries.

“The manoeuvrability of the CF85 around the farm is especially good,” Andrew said. “They have great vision which is such an asset for farm work where you need to have your wits about you. The view out of the DAF CF85 is very good for this type of work.

Plenty of grunt

“I particularly like the MX engine for its low down torque and quietness,” Andrew revealed. “A lot of our work is running outside of top gear where we utilise the lower ratios in the ZF box. There’s lots of short little bursts and it’s a nice smooth engine that delivers really good fuel economy. It’s a very quiet engine too; even with the engine retarder engaged it’s especially quiet which means we can operate it in towns without disturbing the community.”

Andrew said that when he was offered an evaluation CF85 with the MX engine set at 510hp he was confident that the additional power would be an asset to their operation.

“Our first CF85 460 is a very well balanced truck and has been doing a great job for us in the two years we’ve had it,” Andrew said. “I’d heard good reports of the 510 horsepower engine in the larger DAF XF105 and Kenworth T409SAR which instilled confidence in the decision to take up the offer.”

Arnold’s CF85 510 delivers maximum power between 1500rpm and 1900rpm, with top torque output of 2500Nm available from as low as 1000rpm through to 1410rpm. To maximise the advantage of the additional 50hp, the CF85 510 is equipped with a 16-speed ZF ASTronic Automated Manual Transmission (AMT) instead of the 12-speed that is standard for the 460hp engine version.

The CF85 510 has a GCM of 24,600kg and a GVM of 70,000kg. The front axle is rated to 7500kg and the rear axles are Meritor MT23-165 with a maximum design load of 20,900kg and lockable inter-axle and cross-axle differentials all riding on the proven Kenworth eight-bag air suspension.

Andrew agrees that any fine-tuning of the integration of the driveline and braking technologies to suit Australian conditions in the CF85 510 have long been sorted out in the other PACCAR trucks with the same specification. Consequently, Andrew was confident the 510hp version of the CF85 would work seamlessly right from the start.

PACCAR claim that they’re hoping to position the CF85 510 as a contender for the B-Double market due to the 500+hp rating and the extra gear ratios.

Safety and comfort

In terms of safety, the CF85 510 is right up there. Brakes are disc on the front and drums on the rear with EBS (Electronic Braking System incorporating ABS), exhaust brake (retardation power 320kW at 2100rpm), ASR (Anti Slip Control) and Hill Start Aid (with AS-Tronic transmissions only).

Depending on the application, operators can chose to incorporate the optional safety package that includes Adaptive Cruise Control (ACC) with forward collision warning, lane departure warning and vehicle stability control.

Andrew said that the cabin of the CF85 is very comfortable with a neat cockpit-style wrap-around dash that puts all the controls within easy reach of the driver.

“The fit and finish inside is superb,” Andrew adds. “The walnut dash fascia and lavish upholstery make the cabin more like a luxury car rather than a truck. One thing I really like about the CF85 is the two step entry. In our line of work where we can have up to 30 or 40 deliveries in a day the ease of the two-step entry really is an advantage for us.”

The biggest surprise Andrew revealed was the fuel economy of the new CF85 510 is even more economical than their older 460 variant.

“From the driver’s seat the two trucks are identical when you look at the dash, all the switches are in the same place and the driving position is the same. However there are subtle differences in driving the two trucks, and the difference in gearing shows up in certain spots.”

I’m more than content with our DAF trucks and especially pleased with the economy and reliability of them,” Andrew concluded. “The fact that they are so comfortable to operate is really a bonus.”

Specifications:

Engine: PACCAR MX375 12.9-litre six-cylinder turbocharged intercooled

Power: 510hp (375kW) at 1500 to 1900rpm

Torque: 2500Nm at 1000 to 1410rpm

Transmission: ZF AS-Tronic 16-speed automated manual

Rear Axles: Meritor MT23-165

Configuration: 6x4

Front Sus: Parabolic springs with shocks

Rear Sus: Airglide 400 8-bag air suspension with shock absorbers and stabiliser bars

Fuel tanks: 1 x 430 + 1 x 340 litre aluminium

AdBlue: 45 litres

Brakes: Disc/drum with EBS (Electronic Braking System incorporating ABS)

Cabin: sleeper

Turntable: Jost JSK37 Ballrace