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For a Fresh & Clean Fleet
Have a Hino!

This month's magazine is reading like a back-track through our previous issues.

First we revisit Nissan's Navara and now we're revisiting ALSCO – the company offering the complete textile rental solution, including washroom consumables and First Aid supplies.

The last time we spoke to ALSCO, the company had moved its customer service representatives (CSR's) into a fleet of Mercedes Sprinter vans and that was in 2007.

Since then, ALSCO has added something new into its vehicle mix and taken up Hino for its bigger-than-van requirements. In Auckland there are four Hino's doing ALSCO's business under the Fresh & Clean operations banner, which handles the maintenance and upkeep of washrooms, supplying soaps, sanitisers, fresheners and similar products.

Hence the need for slightly-larger-than-van vehicles like the Hino 300 trucks – two of which do the across town servicing for businesses extending north to Hatfields Beach and south as far as Mercer. The other two trucks service the Auckland metropolitan areas.

These trucks can do anywhere up to 300kms a day and the CSRs are expected to spend 7 to 8 hours a day with their vehicles, which means the Hinos are effectively working partners rather than just beasts of burden.

We asked the drivers for their impressions of the Hinos, based on their experiences.

Universally, the automatic transmissions came up high on the

score cards. Even for the longer haul trucks, the autos made life a lot better for the drivers and cut down on the costs associated with clutch and gearbox wear and tear.

"We like to keep the drivers with the trucks," says Cam Thornton of Fresh & Clean. "We've found it works well for the regular servicing - which is all the money we've had to spend on the Hinos, by the way – and the drivers tend to regard their vehicles as theirs."

This is actually quite a serious consideration. Being out in the public eye and delivering quality in terms of products and service associated with hygiene, it is important that the vehicles look good.

To this end, the drivers take care of their trucks and keep them looking – if you'll excuse the expression - fresh and clean.

Having said this, the trucks are working vehicles and keeping them in good order is not easy. Fresh & Clean tends to keep their vehicles for up to 5 years, after that, it's time to replace.

Thus far, the Hinos have been serving their time well, the Auckland trucks having been on the fleet for three years.

"We have used other vehicles in the past and we still use some non-Hino trucks today, but when Hino approached us with the US04 trucks we thought it was worth giving them a go," says Cam. "The aftersales care from Bill Lauchlan and the team at Truck Stops (NZ) Ltd is first rate," he adds "and it's fair to say we are more than happy with the Hino product."

With an endorsement like that, what more do you want to know?