

# Hino 500 takes you higher

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Your existing transporter is suddenly written off and your business depends on meeting your client's needs, NOW. What do you do? Jamie Ryan, general manager at Skyrise Hire knew what to do — he contacted Hino.

**S**kyrise Hire specialises in access solutions. Originally based in East Tamaki, Auckland, it recently moved to a larger site in Penrose, sharing a building with associated company Landex. Skyrise Hire supplies everything from self-powered scissor lift platforms and articulated booms, to dedicated aerial platform trucks. The aim is to get workers safely to and from those hard to reach places.

Until recently, Skyrise Hire moved these machines around with its trusty old 1997 Hino six-wheeler transporter. Unfortunately, there was an incident and the truck was suddenly out of service, forever. Ryan says, "We'd had such a good run from the old Hino and from our 2006 Hino FD, which has a dedicated Aichi SK27A truck-mounted boom on the back, that it made sense to call Hino to find a replacement. They're rock solid reliable and we've never had any trouble with them."

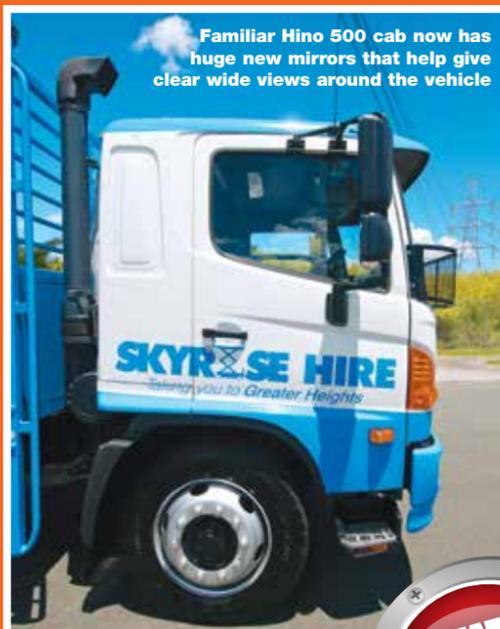
Lucky for Skyrise Hire, Hino had just the right cab chassis in stock, ready to go. It was a bit outside the spec Ryan thought he wanted — it was a medium wheelbase Hino FM8JRKG-WGN 6x4 with an Allison 3500 series automatic transmission with double overdrive, typically aimed at waste collection or cement distribution. As it's turned out, the spec might be damn near perfect for the company's needs.

Boss Motorbodies was the nearest body builder when Skyrise Hire was based in East Tamaki and, once again lucky for Ryan, it could squeeze the build in quickly. Ryan says, "Marin, Mike, and the team at Boss Motorbodies were awesome to deal with. They listened to what we needed and worked with us step by step to get it done. I supplied the 18,000lb Superwinch and Powerbeam 1000 LED worklights, which I got from TWL, and the guys at Boss fitted it all up. I'm really happy with the result."

The Skyrise Hire driver couldn't be more complimentary. He says, "It's a pleasure to drive, mate. I just love it — especially the auto,



A faultless run from the Hino FD and great service helped Skyrise Hire keep choosing Hino as its truck make of choice



Familiar Hino 500 cab now has huge new mirrors that help give clear wide views around the vehicle



Hino J08E-TB 190kW straight six engine is well proven in countless applications nationwide



Boss Motorbodies deck custom-designed and built to carry all but the largest of Skyrise Hire's access machines

once I got used to it. It's only done around 3000km, so it's not even broken in yet."

We loaded up a Genie boom lift, which, at around 7500kg, we figured would give us a decent impression of how the Hino transporter performs.

My first impression is the wheelbase and deck look a bit shorter and higher than you'd normally expect from a machinery transporter, however Ryan says, "Boss Motorbodies painstakingly measured all the machines and worked it all out."

The end result is a truck that easily manoeuvres around town, whilst comfortably carrying all but one of the machines available for hire. With the Genie boom lift chained on, it starts to make more sense. The truck looks like it was custom made for it... probably because it was.

When it was launched around 2001, the Hino 500 cab was well ahead of its time and looked far more modern than its competitors. A dozen or so years on and it's stood the test of time well, as evidenced by how many you see on the roads. Getting in the cab is easy using the two well-placed steps and grab-handles. The interior has a welcoming, still reasonably modern, almost car-like feel. The driver seat isn't the best but it's more than adequate. You can adjust the steering column to suit almost any driver shape or size, so it's quick and easy to get comfortable.

The mirrors seem huge (so big in fact, the main mirror on the left is taller than the door window) and have flat, heated, and in-cab adjustable glass in the main housings. The blindspot mirrors each side are also huge and help give a panoramic view. One slight issue is the left mirror set produced a very loud whistle. I'm sure Hino will address this at the first service, if the driver doesn't fix it himself first.



User-friendly Allison 3500 series automatic selector. Auto helps provide smooth and effortless runs between traffic lights.

Compare machinery specs at 

Hino 2627	
Gross vehicle mass	26,000kg
Engine model	J08E TB
Engine power	190kW (255hp)
Emission standard	US04 emissions compliant
Transmission	Auto six-speed Allison 3500 series with double overdrive
Rear suspension	Hendrickson HAS airbag suspension with shock absorbers
Deck	Boss Motorbodies, purpose-built non-slip, with electro/hyd ramps
Winch	TWL supplied 18000lb Superwinch with remote control
Additional lighting	TWL supplied Powerbeam 1000 LED worklamps and LED lightbar

The company's driver says he preferred to operate the transmission manually, but I found selecting 'D' and letting it do its thing worked perfectly, both up and down the transmission. However, I only briefly drove it with the 7500kg load on.

Leaving the Skyrise Hire depot, the first thing I notice is the silky smoothness of the transmission. The Allison 3500 series automatic allows you to gently squeeze on the power and glide away, quickly getting up to speed with the surrounding traffic. Absolutely brilliant for start-stop metro work and this is exactly what this truck will spend its days doing. The Hino engineers have done a great job of matching the engine, transmission, and driveline. On the motorway the revs got up to around 2100rpm at around 90kph, which is better than I had expected. Some automatics are very high revving at highway speeds, but this one, with its double overdrive, wasn't too bad, so it should be pretty good on fuel.

“ Ryan specifically chose air rear suspension to help keep the ride height down and allow them to lower the rear suspension, to assist the ramp angle if required. ”

There was a slight vibration somewhere in the driveline at very low speeds (sub 30kph), which was disconcerting, however, I'm not overly familiar with driving the Allison auto, so it may be nothing.

Brakes were outstanding. I had to be gentle on the pedal as it was very light and almost car-like to use. The exhaust brake was effective enough to encourage use, which is more than can be said for some older trucks.

Ryan specifically chose air rear suspension to help keep the ride height down and allow them to lower the rear suspension, to assist the ramp angle if required. The FM Hino feels surefooted with the 7500kg Genie on the back, the ride is smooth and steady, and the truck feels smaller than it actually is. With around 190kW (260hp) and 754Nm (555lb/ft) max torque, it's not going to win any races up the hills, but nor should it.

Here we have an excellent example of local suppliers knowing what works for our market and committing units to stock. Hino had exactly what Skyrise Hire needed, right when it needed it and at a competitive price. Together with a good history with its other Hinos and great service from the local Hino agent, Skyrise Hire has no reason to change anytime soon. It's since purchased another Hino to fit an aerial platform to. Keep an eye out for it in a future issue of DOW. ■