



To boldly go where no Hino has gone before

300 series 4x4 will take you anywhere

David Meredith

Someone in Hino's engineering department arranged a Vulcan mind-meld between products to get the new 300 series 4x4 on the road, despite it taking nearly a decade since dealers started asking for it.

The chassis from the 4x2 Hino is sitting there but jacked up a considerable distance from the ground.

There's a sub-frame bolted to the bottom of the chassis at the rear.

That allows the rear suspension to connect without the need for a kink in the chassis just behind the cab as per the Fuso 4x4.

But it also means the payload loading height is sky-high, and the front of the Hino looks as gangly as a teenager in a growth spurt.

Underneath all that lot is an air-operated transfer case from the 500 series — there's an air compressor and reservoir

bolted on — connected to the usual Hino 300 diff and rear axle, and a front diff and axle

developed for remote applications in Japan's north island.

The manual front hubs are also out of the Hino parts bin, and are a bit of a techno throwback, particularly as the 4x4 system is engaged by a push-button control on the dash, as is the low-range.

This was queried with Hino at the national launch, and we got some twaddle about how much better manual hubs were “in certain circumstances”.

The result is that the cab has no real indication you're in a rock-hopping light truck. You'll feel instantly at home if you drive a regular 300 series for

work. Anyway, the formula — “your parts to my parts; my parts to your parts” — works, and works well.

The manual five-speed gearbox takes a bit of practice as the spring loading is a touch off-centre.

But once that's ingrained it's easy to get a decent gear, particularly as the engine has a

wide torque band starting at 1000rpm.

It's a mighty climb to get on board this Hino. There are two metal steps and they're heavily skewed towards the front

bumper. If you're carrying lunch you'll need to put it on the seat first as you'll need both hands to get on board.

Once in the seat it's a spectacular view from your perch in the sky. You're up there with some prime movers, so traffic is no problem.

All the controls are well set for ease of use.

There's an exhaust brake on the left of the steering column but it's a classic Japanese unit which really only makes a noise. The infotainment unit is a touchscreen which incorporates up to three cameras.

The Hino cab trim is familiar



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and designed for drivers and passengers with lots of “stuff” such as keys, pens, papers, drinks, logbooks and the like.

On the road, any kind of road or track, this is a Hino that will perform with the dependability to reassure any user that they can send it anywhere, anytime, and it will just get the job done — without breaking.

WA Hino’s Paul McGovern loved it so much he’s ordered a bunch.

He’s tipping the crew cab to be the star.



Once in the seat it’s a spectacular view from your perch in the sky. You’re up there with some prime movers.



Hino’s product boss took this 300 4x4 away on Christmas holidays. The transfer case from the 14-tonner, right, will outlast this chassis