Hino’s latest Euro V version of their popular 300 series proves itself as a versatile workhorse.

There is no chrome on most Hino trucks. They are usually bought by fleet managers, accountants, contractors and end users who see transport as a secondary but necessary evil to being in business. Such folk focus on what a truck will cost to buy, run, service and how long it will keep doing its job before the cheque book has to be dragged out again. Don’t even mention downtime to these people.

Yet they keep coming back to Hino, who have just clocked up 50 years of sales in New Zealand and must be keeping this group of buyers happy.

At the lighter end of the market Hino have most applications covered with their 300 series which includes models from two to four tonnes payload capacity and a choice of single or dual cabs. The entire range meets Euro V using EGR and Hino engineers have snuck in several useful improvements right under the noses of their own corporate bean-counters.

I joined Scott Turnbull from Jetpatcher Corporation for a day out with their road patching gang in a new Hino 917 series LWB. It is probably a wise division of duties. Scott and his offsider Darwin go to work. A big burst of low-pressure air from the nozzle is used to blow water and loose material from the pothole before a coat of emulsion is sprayed to bond with the underlying and surrounding road surface. Then a mixture of aggregate and liquid emulsion (liquid tar) a four cylinder diesel auxiliary engine to provide compressed air and heat as it first appears. The main components are a big hopper to hold aggregate, a tank containing emulsion (liquid tar) a four cylinder diesel auxiliary engine to provide compressed air and heat as well as a discharge hose on a moveable arm at the rear. There are also smaller compartments for sand, water and a vibrating plate compactor.

After finding a suitable pothole near Jetpatcher’s Henderson yard, Scott and his offsider Darwin go to work. A big burst of low-pressure air from the nozzle is used to blow water and loose material from the pothole before a coat of emulsion is sprayed to bond with the underlying and surrounding road surface. Then a mixture of aggregate and liquid emulsion (liquid tar) a four cylinder diesel auxiliary engine to provide compressed air and heat as it first appears. The main components are a big hopper to hold aggregate, a tank containing emulsion (liquid tar) a four cylinder diesel auxiliary engine to provide compressed air and heat as well as a discharge hose on a moveable arm at the rear. There are also smaller compartments for sand, water and a vibrating plate compactor.

A conventional butterfly exhaust brake keeps speed under control on the downhill sections and is backed up by four wheel discs with ABS, VSC (vehicle stability control) and traction control as standard. Vehicle stability control is a valuable safety aid and Hino are ahead of their Japanese counterparts by fitting it to their light truck range. The cab is more comfortable than I remember Japanese trucks to be and it is easy to converse along the way with interior noise levels of between 68 and 72dB dependent on the road surface.

Some things haven’t changed, such as my ability to find some of the worst potholes on our back roads around Pukekohe but the little Hino soaks these up diplomatically. Potholes are really Scott’s specialty anyhow and after a quick stop to check fuel consumption (around 15.5L/100km), he puts these skills into action.

The Jetpatcher equipment isn’t as complex as it first appears. The main components are a big hopper to hold aggregate, a tank containing emulsion (liquid tar) a four cylinder diesel auxiliary engine to provide compressed air and heat as well as a discharge hose on a moveable arm at the rear. There are also smaller compartments for sand, water and a vibrating plate compactor.

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emulsion is sprayed into the hole with sufficient pressure to compact it down. A final run over with the plate compactor and a sprinkling of sand means the patch is ready for light traffic within ten minutes.

It is all very quick and, as Scott explains, usually takes less time than the associated setting up of traffic control measures. Another major advantage over traditional asphalt patching methods is that there is minimal wastage of materials and the truck can operate in country areas without visiting a hot mix plant.

Jetpatcher produce larger units to suit trucks up to 12 tonne capacity and these also have the ability to lay a chip seal surface by means of a spreader box at the rear. It is a system developed by Jim Turnbull (Scott’s father) in the 1990s and gradually refined in light of their own experience. Over 500 units have been exported all around the world but the full potential of the system has been slow to be accepted in New Zealand.

With more pressure on our roading budget and a growing need to respond quickly to surface damage in high traffic areas the Jetpatcher system might soon become part of every contractor’s front line tools.