THE POWER OF CHOICE

BEING ABLE TO SELECT YOUR OWN FUEL SUPPLY OFFERS BETTER ACCOUNTABILITY AND GUARANTEED QUALITY

FOR businesses that operate vehicles 24/7 it is imperative that fuel accessibility is maintained throughout a 24-hour period. One solution is to base your depots near 24-hour fuel outlets. The alternative, and one that is gaining more attention, is to have your own on-site fuel bunkering facility.

When on-site fuel storage meant underground tanks and all the environmental restrictions and controls that went with it, there was obviously a convincing argument that the effort might just not be worth the advantage. But now, with above-ground fuel pods of varying capacities, it's easy to find the advantages outweigh the perceived difficulty of establishing such a facility.

Bulk Fuel Australia was formed by the company's current three directors in 2009, with the vision of providing all customers with an industry fuel supply and support service that could tip the scales towards the efficiency and ease of having on-site refuelling services.

There's a range of fuel tanks available, starting with capacities of 1,800 litres that weigh 2,650 kg, and extending up to 9,000 litres for a container that weighs in at 13,000 kg.









For those needing larger capacities there's a maximum size of 80,000 litres available, and, for operators working on specific building or work sites, it's possible to organise individual deliveries by mobile bulk tanker that suit the downtime options of the buyer.

As you might imagine, fuel supply on demand at remote sites or at obscure times of the night when the majority of locals are asleep can only be regulated if the systems in place to control and record the delivery are extremely robust.

Versatile delivery options are the key to the rapid growth of the company.

Bulk Fuel Australia operates its own fleet of compact tankers capable of accessing and supplying fuel in areas with difficult access. Able to provide a refuelling service to machinery of all sizes, including plant and stationary engines such as power generators and pumps, the smaller truck fleet units are fitted with 30 m hose reels and can reach equipment in almost any location.

The level of reporting available for a customer includes captured information of the date, time, volume, plant type, plant ID, order number, engine hours and cost, as well as any other additionally required data. Bar code identification is also available for all deliveries to plant and equipment to prevent on-site theft or the refuelling of the wrong equipment when a site is left unattended and equipment identity can be difficult.

As Mark Plunkett, director of Bulk Fuel Australia explained to *PowerTorque*, the service provided to customers extends much further than that of fuel supply alone.

"Because we are not aligned with any one fuel supplier, we can accommodate specific customer requirements for a particular fuel or the supply of a required lubricant brand," said Mark.

"With delivery based on a bar-code identification system there is little room for error. If supply for individual employees is required, then we can provide access to the BP Plus fuel card system that identifies the employee and validates the purchase, recording the details for company records," Mark added.

To supply fuel and lubricant requirements in areas with limited access, Bulk Fuel Australia relies on a fleet of DAF rigid tankers, with four CF85 models, one CF75 and four LF units.

"After looking at other brands we made the decision on the DAFs because of the value for money and suitability for the task they fulfil," said Mark Plunkett.





Mark Plunkett, director of BFA (Left), with company driver Brian Jenkins (Right).



"We run bulk fuel only in rigids, the largest being a 10x4 with a lifting rear lazy axle, and the remainder being eight-wheelers. We also have a fleet of 4x2 rigid trucks that includes 14 Hino GD and GH models, plus 4 Isuzu FR600s.

"We stepped up to the LF as being more robust with better ground clearance for some of the more off-road areas. Being a little bit bigger we can use them for the smaller bulk jobs. DAFs are configured as 10,000 litres capacity, the Hinos at 6,000 litres, with barrels by Marshall Lethlean and supplied locally through Liquip," added Mark.

The latest DAF addition is a CF85-460 eight-wheeler powered by the DAF six-cylinder, 12.9-litre diesel engine and fitted with a ZF 12-speed AS-Tronic automated manual transmission. Maximum power of 340 kW (460 hp) is produced at 1500-1900 rpm with peak torque of 2300 Nm rated at 1000-1410rpm.

Featuring selective catalytic reduction technology to minimise emissions, the DAF CF features electronic braking systems (incorporating ABS) ASR (anti-slip control) and with the option of a ZF intarder capable of a retardation power of 500 kW.

"The comfort and drivability of the DAF rigids is great. Visibility is very important for us as a lot of our work takes place in the city. There's no real restriction on were they provide our service. We'll do whatever is required wherever it is required, including special events that require fuel for on-site power generation on a temporary basis, such as a one-day concert.

"One of our supply advantages is that we can be product specific. If a customer wants BP or Caltex we are able to fill their requirements," said Mark.

All trucks in the BFA fleet have onboard satellite tracking together with dashboard drive cameras that have their own independent satellite tracking and upload system. The system selected by BFA features a camera recording of the traffic movements on the road ahead, plus the cabin interior.

"Although some fleets are fitting the systems that only film the traffic movements ahead of the vehicle, we have already proven the value of filming inside the cab. In one instance, the camera filmed a vehicle that pulled into the side of the cab and was not visible on the forward camera. It is a valuable support tool," said Mark.

"We don't actually see ourselves as a long-distance transport provider, more of a service provider. All our trucks are operating over a fairly short distance. That's the market we play in. We can also supply lubricants if a customer requires them," said Mark.

"We know the market and what is required – it's machinery, generators and other small equipment. From Queensland we extend into Northern NSW, Victoria and Melbourne and will shortly have a few trucks starting in Perth.

"We offer pods on some sites and have imported tanks to have them on loan to other companies. We provide the tank and the fuel and have expanded into providing tanks in Darwin where we have arrangements for local companies to fill them. We never say no.

"All our DAFs were bought through Brown and Hurley, Darra, where the follow up was excellent. We have them serviced through B&H outlets at Darra and Townsville in Queensland as well as at the PACCAR DAF dealership in Victoria at Laverton.