

# THE GAME CHANGER



Jesse McDowell has big plans “to become the biggest brick and block outfit in Auckland, if not New Zealand” and his new 8x4 HD FS3147 is playing a big part in helping him towards that goal.

Explaining the big orange letters on the grille of Auckland Brick and Block Layers’ new HD, Jesse says: “it’s a Game Changer, because it’s letting us grow the business in a way we couldn’t without it, and in a way others aren’t trying.”

“Being able to set our own timetable with deliveries, rather than relying on someone else, means more than saving money, it means we can be more efficient with our time, and that means we can do more jobs.

“When it comes to work, I’m a yes-man, in that I don’t like to turn it down!” says Jesse with a grin.

The HD transports concrete blocks, a forklift, and scaffolding to and from job sites. While he employs a full-time driver, it’s clear Jesse enjoys driving his big new truck whenever the

opportunity arises.

“In terms of power – there’s plenty of it. I wouldn’t want any less, given we’ve always got it running on or close to maximum load [13.58T], but with 470hp, I haven’t ever needed more. Both our driver, Gagan, and I use it mainly in Tiptronic – it’s smooth and delivers the power well.”

The HD has other features Jesse appreciates, especially for the kind of conditions in which they use it: “it’s a good height off the ground, which is useful for rough building sites. I’ve needed the diff lock when it’s gotten muddy, too.”

The size of the sites Jesse works on has changed over the past few years, as the size of his business has grown. In 2010, he was a sole-trader, working seven days a week. In

2014, he established the company and now he’s got 15 staff and contractors.

“We do all sorts of jobs. It’s 95% residential, from the new-build multi-level apartments we’re working on today – there’s 50,000 blocks on this site – but we still do small jobs like repairing a block wall after someone’s driven into it.”

HD FS3147	8x4
 <b>GVM / GCM</b> 30,800kg / 55,000kg	
 <b>Power / Torque</b> 346kW / 2227Nm	
 <b>Transmission</b> 12-spd AMT	
 <b>Wheelbase</b> 5,870mm	

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Jesse's experience with blocklaying pre-dates his time as a sole-trader, then company owner: "I'm third-generation in the trade, though when I was a younger man, I never wanted to do this. My father worked for himself and it seemed like there wasn't enough reward for all the hard work, so I went and got two degrees in commerce and property. Then again, I did always want a truck – just like my own kids now, I loved trucks when I was a young boy. I never thought I'd have one this big though!"

The big eight-wheeler is an upgrade on his previous FUSO: "we had a Fighter, which took five pallets and the forklift had to be towed on a trailer. I was new to trucking three years ago, so the Fighter was ideal. I've since worked up through my licences and I jump in whenever Gagan is away."

"When I was deciding on which truck to get, I went home and did my homework and the numbers on the HD stacked up. That was part of the decision – the other part was how willing Mike Orr from Keith Andrews was to help me get the truck specified and customised to my specific needs."

"Hiab Engineering Services, in Penrose, chopped it and lengthened it a bit, so I could fit ten pallets, two-wide and five-long, with the forklift on the back." Once the basics of the beaver-tailed transport deck were decided on, there were still some finishing touches to add, as Jesse details: "we did some nice little customisations – like the steps leading up to the newly fabricated grab-handle on the side, rear-end deck access steps, the alloy visor and bumper, the lights up top, the lights pointing back onto the deck,

the toolboxes, the hydraulic ramps for the forklift."

"I like to be organised – have everything lined up and in the right place and the HD has everything we need for the job."

While the new truck is crucial to Jesse's grand plan, investing in a big new piece of equipment is a significant decision and its merit wasn't obvious to everyone.

"My father thought I was crazy, buying a truck this size: 'you just love to spend money!' is what he said when he first saw it. But things have changed a lot in the industry since his time; I've done the maths, so I know the HD stacks up. Besides, if you want to change the game, you have to have a bold game plan."

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