

Chill the fuel bill

IN A BID TO REDUCE ITS FRIDGE FUEL AND OTHER RUNNING COSTS, **MADDEN'S REFRIGERATED TRANSPORT** HAS COMMISSIONED TWO **mitsubishi PEGASUS FRIDGE PLANTS** ON NEW **FTE TRAILERS**. WHILE IT'S STILL EARLY DAYS, THE VITAL SIGNS ARE POSITIVE.



Apart from wages, fuel costs are by far the biggest impost on any trucking company's bottom line. And refrigerated transport operators are lumped with a double whammy, having to fork out for truck and fridge fuel.

It's little wonder then that most operators are searching high and low to secure even the smallest savings, which, over time, add up to significant dollars.

Such is the case with Madden's Refrigerated Transport, based at Harden in south western New South Wales.

The company was founded by Tony Madden in 1976 with a single prime mover and flat-top semi-trailer he used to haul general freight for the first 18 months before moving into refrigerated work carting hanging meat.

Specialising in temperature-controlled transport ever since, today the Madden's fleet numbers 22 prime movers, a mix of

Kenworth and DAF, along with FTE and Schmitz Cargobull trailers. The company also runs its own cold storage facility.

"I started transporting hanging meat to Canberra stores from Goulburn abattoir in 1978," Tony says. "Then a couple of years later the company started up an abattoir at Harden so I moved my family to Harden in 1980 and we've been here ever since."

As with other forms of mechanical apparatus, transport fridge units of that era were rather primitive, some even required hand starting like a lawn mower. But time and technology have turned them into sophisticated machines that provide an essential link in the temperature-controlled supply chain.

Competing with a number of well-established brands, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Thermal Systems in Japan has developed the Pegasus series of fridge units with a range of features designed to

enhance efficiencies for transport operators. The units purchased by Madden's are Pegasus TFFV2000D-e Multi configured for dual-zone operation. They feature solar battery chargers and electronic TX valves in the host and remote units (front and rear zones) for precise temperature control, quick pull down and enhanced fuel economy. Importantly, they come standard with electric stand-by operation and are telematics ready.

The Mitsubishi Refrigeration for trucks & trailer product range, including the Pegasus & Pegasus Multi, are imported and distributed locally by Melbourne based Quality Transport Refrigeration Services (QTRS), with New South Wales customers taken care of by Sydney based, Sales and service agent, Australian Transport Equipment (ATE). For Tony Madden, choosing to buy two Mitsubishi Pegasus units is part of a strategy to rein in costs and ensure maximum profitability in his business.

"It's still very early days, but they are certainly quieter than some of our other units and they appear to be good on fuel," Tony says. "However, the big advantage we expect is that they will be significantly less expensive to maintain in terms of the cost of replacement parts and servicing." Madden's has its own workshop to service the trucks and trailers and Tony says they can do the basic servicing of the fridge engines there, while ATE at Wetherill Park in Sydney's west takes care of the refrigeration side of things.

ATE's location fits well with Madden's operations, a large part of which involves



transporting groceries to western NSW stores, loaded at nearby Minchinbury and Prestons.

According to Tony, this grocery contract requiring three temperature zones (freezer, chiller and ambient) inside the trailers has revealed another significant advantage of the Pegasus units.

"With other dual-zone fridge units you have to set the freezer temperature at the front and chiller at the rear and you can't reverse it," he explains. "Whereas with these Mitsubishis you can run them the opposite way around."

"It's a big thing for us because sometimes when we arrive for loading the freezer pallets aren't ready and so the driver has to sit there with an empty trailer until they are. Now with the Mitsubishis we can load the chiller at the front, put up the insulation pads and load the ambient while we're waiting for the freezer to come. This can reduce our loading time by an hour."

Another feature Tony is pleased about, particularly as summer is just around the corner, is the stand-by electric operation of the Mitsubishi units.

"Especially in the hotter time of year it's very handy to have electric operation and we believe it will help lower our operating costs significantly, in addition to reducing noise pollution," he says. "We often get 45 degree days here in summer and to have trailers loaded with freezer and the diesel motor hammering away at full noise in the heat is not ideal."

"As I mentioned earlier, it's still early days and we will be closely monitoring the operation of these new units, particularly the fuel consumption, over the next 12 months."



Fast Fact

Smart technology in the Pegasus fridge units enables freezer and chiller temperatures to be set at either end of the trailer. This feature can save Madden's Refrigerated Transport an hour when loading groceries.