

Genio Genius



The introduction of Mahindra's new Genio model represents a more sophisticated and modern approach to the New Zealand light commercial market. Whilst their current Pik Up range appeals mainly to the agricultural sector, the Genio will capture a much wider audience.

Keen pricing is a key draw card with the single cab and dropside deck 4x2 model we reviewed carrying an RRP of \$23,490 including GST, but excluding on road costs. For that money you get a 2.2 litre four-cylinder turbo-intercooled diesel engine of 88kw (120hp) driving through a five-speed manual box to a solid rear axle. It has coil springs

and a double wishbone setup up with good old fashioned leaf springs bringing up the rear. The braking system is a conventional disc/drum system with vacuum booster and ABS control. Tyres are Bridgestone 215/70R15 with a high-way tread pattern.

Genio's short bonnet and upright cab pay dividends with better than average cargo space. The solid galvanised steel and timber dropside deck is built by Foot Engineering of Penrose and measures 2670mm x1800mm with a loading height of around 900mm. It is easy to use with a robust tie rail and combined cab guard and ladder rack at the front. There are no steps so climbing on to the

deck requires a little agility.

New Zealand Trucking's review vehicle was loaded up with one of Mahindra's tractors, the 4WD 25HST model. This rugged looking machine weighs in at around 900kg with roll bar and brush guard, providing a good test of the Genio's load carrying capacity. With a tare of approximately 1800kg full of fuel, the 900kg tractor on the back and allowing 120kg for our editor and his (really heavy) camera we would have been approaching the maximum GVM of 2980kg.

The cab is relatively roomy with enough headroom, seat and steering column adjustment to suit even larger



The engine bay is neatly laid out with easy access for regular checks. The interior has ample room for larger drivers.

drivers. There are decent cup holders in the centre console and door pockets as well as some storage room behind the seats, plus a small lockable toolbox under the tray. The dash is semi rigid ABS plastic that is easy to clean but the light coloured carpet is less suited to a working truck. A couple of heavy rubber mats, such as those fitted to our review vehicle, would be a wise investment. Controls are of the conventional Japanese layout with nicely spaced pedals and a clearly defined gearshift pattern. It is a vehicle that most drivers will quickly feel at home in.

Take off with our tractor on board is rather sedate, but once under way the mHawk turbo diesel does a fine job. This engine has been developed as a joint project between Mahindra and AVL of Austria and incorporates up to date technology such as a 16 valve DOHC layout and variable geometry turbocharger. The tachometer redlines at 6500rpm, presumably for a petrol engine, but there is no point taking the diesel beyond 4000.

On the motorway the Genio cruises happily at 100kph at around 2500rpm in fifth and holds this speed up either side of the Bombay Hills without



Genio looks right at home on back roads.



A Mahindra four wheel drive tractor took up most of that 2.7 metre deck.



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There's room for muddy boots but optional floor mats are a good idea.



We recorded an impressive 7.2 L/100km on test.

recourse to the gearlever. A little wandering is evident but this could be expected with the high CoG of the load and slight movement in the securing straps.

Gravel roads as well as a couple of farm tracks near Mercer did not bother the Genio and we were soon negotiating the roundabouts of Pukekohe and secondary roads back to SH1. Unless there are major hills the easiest way seems to set the cruise control and leave it in top gear. Comfortable seats and low noise levels (60db at 60kph and 68db at 100kph) indicate Mahindra is paying greater attention to driver comfort now. Safety features include driver and passenger air bags but there is no ANCAP rating available as yet.

Towing capacity of the Genio is 1.8 tonne, less than many of its Japanese competitors, but these are much further up the price ladder. Running costs should be competitive; we recorded a fuel consumption figure of 7.2L/100km on test. Servicing is every 12 months or 10,000km and it comes with a three year/100,000km warranty.

If you are on a budget and looking for a no frills workhorse, the Mahindra Genio certainly deserves a closer look. □

